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Wags of the Stage

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EDITION DE LUXE

Wags of the Stage

by

Joseph Whitton

How now, mad wag!—*Henry IV.*

PHILADELPHIA
GEORGE H. RIGBY
1902

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

While the players may be, as Hamlet says, "The abstract and brief chronicles of the time," yet they are something more. They serve as time-killers and care-quellers for humanity, to prod the tedium of our idle hours, and quell the worries that may rise from out our busy ones.

Many of the players in the past have been accomplished wags, and the rehearsal of their waggery is worthy the book which Mr. Whitton has written. His half-century's intimacy with the Stage and its people has furnished him with the material, and while the greater part of this will be new to his readers, that which they may recognize as old will be, perhaps, none the less pleasing in the new dress with which he has clothed it.

G. H. R.

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THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The Stage might justly be called "A School for Wags." No other profession has turned so many of them loose upon the world, and none other has so sharpened the shafts of waggery. Whether the world is thankful for this, or would be better pleased to have the actor drop his waggishness and stick to the "sock and buskin," is a question which the world itself has answered. While it has hitherto remembered his triumph on the stage, it has not forgotten the play of his humor off of it. Each has its record in the story of his life, and both are essential to its completeness.

The players whose waggery is chronicled in the following pages have all passed away. They no longer "strut and fret their hour" upon any stage—save that mysterious one where they, and all the world, must play their measured part.

J. W.

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

Junius Brutus Booth.

JUNIUS BRUTUS was the father of Edwin. No tragedian of his day had greater fame, and none, perhaps, had greater physical impediments to stand in the way of its endurance. Unlike his son, he possessed no graceful form to catch the eye, and—at the time I saw him—no tuneful voice to captivate the ear. He was short of stature, with a pair of unsymmetric bow-legs, and spoke with a nasal twang—tolerable enough in Shakspere's gravedigger, or Launcelot Gobbo, but strangely out of place in Hamlet or Shylock. However, in the earlier part of his career there *was* melody, and a great deal of it, in his voice, but he was unlucky enough to get a broken nose, and this robbed his intonations of their harmony, and left in its place the twang I have mentioned.

Yet these obstacles—formidable enough to block the path of ordinary genius

—were swept aside by the electric force and earnestness of Booth's impersonations. To those who witnessed them, they were not the mimic creations of an actor. They were realities; and when the audience left the theatre after the fall of the curtain on his Richard, they wondered why history had neglected to mention that "the bloody dog" was, not only crook-backed but also bandy-legged and spoke through his nose.

There was, occasionally, something else about his Richard that truth will pardon me for mentioning. If he had the power to imbue his audience with the belief that he was "Richard himself," it may not be strange that he sometimes indulged in the same belief. It has been an oft-told story, and a true one, that, in one of his performances of Richard at the Arch Street Theatre, in Philadelphia, this belief got so much the better of him in his fight with Richmond that the latter, in order to save his head from the shower of Booth's broadsword blows, leaped over the footlights into the orchestra, and then fled through the audience with the an-

gry Richard close at his heels and hungry for another whack at his brain-pan.

Though the great actor was full of eccentricity, such a bellicose exhibition of it was not frequent, and when it did occur it was easy to be accounted for. He was fond of "the cup"—overly fond of it, like a few other eminent tragedians that had trod the stage before him. This "convivial proneness" was often the source of serious uneasiness to the manager who had engaged him, for when he had an attack of it, he lost, not only the knowledge of his own identity, but also his power or disposition to fulfill his engagements. "Many a time and oft" did he disappoint his manager, by neglecting to put in an appearance, and compel him to close his theatre with an apology to the public stating that the closing was entirely owing to the "severe indisposition of Mr. Booth." The public swallowed the apology and their disappointment good-naturedly, for they were already used to Mr. Booth's "indispositions," and looked upon them as some mysterious disease peculiar to Melpomene's disciples.

Some fifty years or more ago, Mr. E. A. Marshall was the Napoleon of American theatrical managers. He was the lessee of three establishments and ran them all successfully. One was in New York, another in Baltimore, and the third in Philadelphia—the old Walnut. At the time of which I speak, he had played Booth in New York and Baltimore and then brought him to Philadelphia for an engagement of two weeks. In each of the two former cities Mr. Booth had given his manager ample proof of his liability to these attacks of "sudden indisposition," and Marshall was determined to prevent their repetition, if prevention were possible—at least until the end of the engagement.

But how to do it? He pondered over the problem for some time, and the more he pondered the farther away he was from the solution. Should he ask Mr. Booth to oblige him by signing the pledge for two weeks? That was his first idea but he soon dropped it. To approach the tragedian in his sober moments with a request of that nature would

be sure to bruise his dignity, and so sorely that he would refuse, not only to sign the pledge, but to play at all.

Suddenly a bright thought struck him. Calling an attaché of the theatre he said to him: "Go round on the stage and tell the back-doorkeeper that I wish to see him."

The back-doorkeeper's name was Cook. He had been a long time in Marshall's employ and was a fellow of more intelligence than his position deserved.

"Now, Mr. Cook, this, as you know, is Mr. Booth's first night and I have an important task for you to do. If you attend to it faithfully I will see that you are paid for your trouble."

"Thank you, Mr. Marshall, I will try to do so. What is it?"

"It is this; after the performance to-night, and as soon as Mr. Booth leaves his dressing room, I want you to accompany him to his hotel. Don't let him stop anywhere on the way. You understand?"

"I think I do, Mr. Marshall."

"Very well. Now you need not say to

him that you saw me, and that I gave you these directions. In fact I want you to be very careful that you don't. You are simply to join him as he leaves the theatre as if it were a matter of chance and let him think that your offer to go with him was made merely out of politeness."

"I understand you, Mr. Marshall, and will attend to it."

After the performance Cook stood at the back door waiting patiently until he saw the tragedian leave his dressing-room and approach him. Then he spoke:

"Mr. Booth, if you have no objection it will give me great pleasure to walk with you as far as your hotel. The streets, at this time of night, are filled with rowdies and I will be a sort of body-guard for you."

Cook afterward told Mr. Marshall that when he made his polite proposition, Mr. Booth's eyes began to twinkle and look at him in a very earnest way as if they were getting ready to dive to the bottom of all this unusual solicitude. Whether Cook was right or wrong in his suspicion, the reader

can judge for himself when he reads the after-experience of the back-doorkeeper.

In reply to Cook's offer the tragedian merely replied: "Thank you, Mr. Cook, you are very kind, and I shall be pleased to have your company."

When they reached the hotel—a third-rate one which then stood at the northwest corner of Ninth and Market streets, and was much patronized by theatrical people—Cook bade the tragedian good-night and then turned to go. But Booth stopped him.

"Oh no, Mr. Cook, I can't permit you to leave me in that way. Come inside a moment."

Both went up the steps and entered the hotel, and then Cook, with some alarm, saw the actor step up to the bar. If his alarm arose from the thought that the tragedian was about to start on one of his "periodicals," it was needless. Booth's order was simply, "Make me a big bowl of catnip tea; have it as hot as you can make it and send it up immediately to my room."

Greatly relieved in his mind Cook now

thought that he might safely leave the tragedian in the company of his hot catnip, and again started to go.

"Oh no, Mr. Cook, not yet. You must n't go yet. Come to my room with me and sit awhile."

The invitation was so cordially given that Cook felt flattered, coming as it did from so famous a source. Nor did he have the courage to refuse, but followed the tragedian up stairs to his room. What occurred when he got there I will let Mr. Cook himself tell, as he told it to Marshall on the following morning.

"Now, Mr. Marshall, we had been seated in the room but a few minutes when the waiter brought in the bowl of catnip tea which, as I told you, Mr. Booth had ordered. It was a big bowl—so big, that I thought he must have a terribly bad cold if he could swallow all the stuff it contained. Well, he put the bowl on the table by the side of the bed, and then, thinking it time for me to go, I reached for my hat and started for the door. But Mr. Booth stopped me and

took my hat from my hand, saying with a smile: 'No, no, Mr. Cook; this is a very disagreeable night and as you live so far down town it would be very cruel in me to let you venture out. You see I have a bed there broad enough for six people and I insist upon it that you stay all night.'

"I told him I would; what else could I do, Mr. Marshall? I did n't want to offend him, and it looked very much as if I would offend him if I refused."

"Well, go on; what else happened?" asked Marshall.

"When I told him I would stay he said: 'That's right, Mr. Cook; I am glad to see that you have so much good sense. And now I will do all in my power to make you comfortable.'

"And then he began to show what he meant by 'comfortable.' Opening a closet he took out four thick blankets and three heavy comfortables, and piled them all on the bed, although the night was not cold. We then got into bed, Mr. Booth choosing the side near the catnip tea.

"'Now, Mr. Cook,' he said, dipping out a tumblerful of the catnip and swallowing it, 'this is the best stuff in the world to warm up a man.'

"Then he dipped out another tumblerful and handed it to me.

"'Excuse me, Mr. Booth,' I said, 'but—'

"'No *buts,* if you please, Mr. Cook, unless you wish to offend me.'

"What could I do, Mr. Marshall? I did n't want to offend him so I began to sip it.

"'That's not the way to drink catnip tea,' he said. 'You must swallow it down while it's hot!'

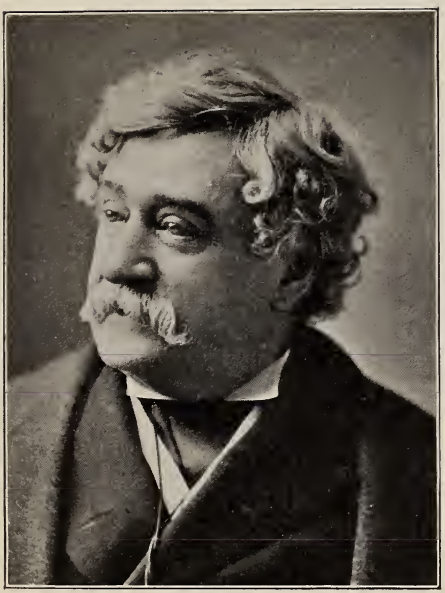
"I got the tumblerful down somehow, and then tried to go to sleep. It was of no use. I began to feel very warm around the neck, and the perspiration commenced to start from the roots of my hair and travel in a stream down my back. I felt that I must either have fresh air or suffocate; so for the purpose of getting a little I pushed down the heavy covers. I thought Mr. Booth was asleep, but he was n't.

"'What do you mean, Mr. Cook? Do you want to give us both our death of cold?' Then he pulled up the covers and leaning over dipped out more of the catnip which he swallowed down, and again filled the tumbler for me. There was no use in my refusing. He was determined to get half of the hot stuff into me, and I believe if there had been no other way to do it, he would have held my head and poured it down. Now, Mr. Marshall, a quart of hot catnip tea emptied into a man may be a good thing to warm him up, if he needs it; but I did n't. Just look at my condition. There's not a dry rag on me. However, let that pass. What I want to say now is this: When you are again in need of somebody to watch Mr. Booth, please don't send for me. I am always willing to oblige you in anything within reason, but am not willing to take a social sweat with a tragedian, or any other man, for the purpose of keeping him sober."

John Brougham.

"THE genial John!" So was he named by his friends, and he had a host of them, who clung to him in his bright days of prosperity, and did not forsake him when the dark ones of adversity threatened his closing years with poverty and want. Then it was that they rallied round him and gave him a solid proof of their unaltered friendship.

Poor John! I knew him, and "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy" he was. His wit was exhaustless. It bubbled from his lips with the liveliness of champagne, and flowed from his pen in a stream of continuous sparkle. He excelled all other burlesque writers in the flash of his humor and in the apt and prolific use of the *jeu-d'esprit*. But his forte was speechmaking. Before the curtain or anywhere else, he was never at a loss for a happy quip with



JOHN BROUGHAM.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

which to tickle the ear of his hearers and set them in a roar. No embarrassing stage emergency—and every actor knows that such a thing will sometimes happen—could ever ripple the surface of John's tranquillity, or upset his presence of mind.

Indeed, he seemed rather to delight in getting his foot into an "emergency" in order that he might show how gracefully he could step out of it.

Here is an instance:

His friends having tendered him a complimentary benefit at Niblo's Garden, he selected one of his own plays for the occasion. He was cast for the principal character, and in one of the scenes, having a long speech to make which was full of sentiment and pathos, he commenced to deliver it, and with all the eloquence he could muster. In the very middle of it, when the audience were beginning to sniffle and reach for their handkerchiefs, one of his friends, with more zeal than judgment, tossed over the footlights a purse of gold that fell at his feet. A look of vexation or indignation—the audi-

ence hardly knew which—shadowed his face as he paused in his lines. Then he stooped, picked up the purse, walked toward the footlights, and with face still flushed with seeming chagrin and anger, he spoke:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I have appeared before you on many occasions and in many characters, and hitherto have received nothing but kindness and consideration at your hands. For this I thank you. But I am at a loss to conceive what I have said or done to-night to merit your disapproval or to deserve this open and gross insult. However, before we go on with the play, I deem it a duty which I owe to myself (*weighing the purse in his hand and then putting it in his pocket*) to pocket the insult, and I 'd like to see the man who 'll try it again!"

The audience, who were completely jockeyed by the serious earnestness of the first part of his speech, and had listened breathlessly to his sham display of indignation, now burst into such a continued roar of laughter, that it was some minutes before the play could proceed.

Here is another incident showing that John's humor was always on tap, and that he never allowed the barrel to get low. He was walking down Broadway with a friend when he stopped abruptly before a tailor's establishment and remarked to his friend: "Come in here a moment with me. I want to see if the overcoat I ordered is done. I have the money in my pocket to-day to pay for it; to-morrow I may not be so fortunate. The money may be in the pocket of some other fellow." They went in and John, finding his coat ready for him, tried it on, saying as he did so: "Well, it is longer than I ordered it; however, that may be a good fault. Where is your bill?" The clerk presented the bill, the amount being seventy dollars, which John paid and was walking out of the store when the proprietor stopped him:

"There's a mistake about that coat, Mr. Brougham."

"A mistake in the length of it? Yes, I see there is. It is considerably longer than I wanted it."

"I don't mean that, Mr. Brougham. I mean that the clerk has made a mistake in the price of it. The bill should have been $80 instead of $70."

"Then you want $10 more? I am very sorry to say that I have n't that much money about me. However, I 'll tell you what you may do. The coat is about that much too long; suppose you cut ten dollars' worth off the tail of it and call it square."

The proprietor laughed and said, "Oh, never mind, Mr. Brougham. Let it pass; we'll make up the $10 in some other way."

"Just as you please," said Brougham and he started for the door. Before he reached it a thought struck him that he had forgotten something, and turning back he whispered it in the proprietor's ear:

"In making up that $10, please don't cut it off the legs of those trousers I ordered yesterday."

One more of his pranks and then we have done with Brougham.

He had written a farce which was about to be played for the first time, and during

the morning's rehearsal of it, one of the actors, who was cast in the part of a servant, came to him with a long face saying:

"Mr. Brougham, I can't do this."

"Can't do what?" asked Brougham.

"Why, this business of William's which you have written down here: *'Enter William holding a nightcap in his hand which he hastily swallows.'* "

"Well, the sentence is a little slipshod in its construction. However, it doesn't mean that you are to swallow your hand, but the nightcap."

"I know what it means, Mr. Brougham."

"Well, then, where is the difficulty?"

"Difficulty?" echoed the puzzled actor, "Why, I never swallowed a nightcap in my life; I don't know how."

"You don't know how? Then it is high time you did. Your education has been neglected. Step this way, please."

William crossed the stage and Brougham whispered something in his ear. The whisper was not loud enough to reach the ears of the other actors, but the broad grin on Wil-

liam's face proved that the noiseless words must have conveyed to his understanding all the information it needed. When night came and the farce was played, William went through his difficult bit of stage business with so much ease, the audience was inclined to believe that the swallowing of nightcaps had been the occupation of his life.

PETER RICHINGS.

From the collection of Charles N. Mann.

Peter Richings.

PETER was a great favorite with the old-time playgoers of New York, as well as those of Philadelphia. In the first-named city he was a member of the Old Park Company and afterwards of the Broadway—a theatre managed by E. A. Marshall. This theatre was demolished long ago to give place to business houses. It stood on the east side of Broadway near Worth street.

Peter left New York to join the company of the Walnut Street Theatre in the Quaker City, and all of its play-goers of fifty years ago—at least those of them who have not accompanied him into the other world—must remember Peter. How could they forget the mercurial spirit of his Mercutio, his Dazzle, his Robert Macaire, and other of his comedy characters which he seemed to have made especially his own?

He was a wag, too, but an unintentional one. That is to say, his humor was of an unconscious type, oozing out at unexpected moments to split the sides of his listeners, while the author of it would be at a loss to discover the source of their merriment, and wonder what he had said that deserved to be laughed at.

As a man Richings was above reproach. He was always polite—severely so, and sometimes stretched his love of decorum to the bounds of absurdity. He looked for propriety in the conduct of all with whom he came in contact, and the slightest breach of it, which an ordinary straight-laced man would overlook, Peter could n't nor would n't tolerate. Hence some of his friends in a spirit of sarcasm, had dubbed him "Punctilio Peter."

But, with it all, he never forgot his politeness. If anyone should chance to be rude enough to puncture his "punctilio" and thus call for his censure, he gave it to them in the mildest manner, and always coupled it with an excuse or explanation that soothed the

recipient into "taking his medicine" as meekly as if Peter had conferred a favor by giving it.

One night at the Walnut Street Theatre, and during the performance of Robert Macaire with Peter as the hero, a young couple, occupying one of the lower private boxes, displayed more evidence of affection than was consistent with Peter's idea of propriety. They were not within view of the audience but were plainly visible to those on the stage. Every few minutes the young man—evidently a newly-married one—would take his eyes from the stage, lean tenderly over to his companion and give her a kiss. Now, kissing a pretty girl is not such a dreadful thing to look at, yet Peter was shocked. Not that he thought their kissing was an unpardonable sin, but he considered it a household delicacy that would n't spoil if they kept it till they got home. And he resolved to tell them so. When the curtain dropped on the first act, and without waiting to change his dress or even to divest his eye of Macaire's conventional

black patch, he went through the entrance that opened into the lobby of the theatre and tapped lightly at the private-box door. In a moment or two it was opened by the young Benedick himself and then Peter, in the most urbane tones, began to unload the object of his visit:

"Pardon me, my dear sir, for thus rudely interrupting you, but really sir, we can't allow this sort of thing; you must try to keep it till you get home. It is contrary to our rules; and besides, sir—besides—we don't do it ourselves!"

WILLIAM RUFUS BLAKE.

From the collection of Charles N. Mann.

William Rufus Blake.

BLAKE was an actor of the old school. He was a "light comedian" in his younger days, and a very good one; but as the years crept on they piled the flesh upon him until at last he became so corpulent he was forced to abandon the line of light comedy and take up that of "first old men." In his impersonations of these he at once became a greater favorite than he had ever been in those of light comedy. In certain parts, notably Jesse Rural, in *Old Heads and Young Hearts,* and Old Rapid, in *A Cure for the Heartache,* he had few, if any, equals, and his Sir Harcourt Courtley, in *London Assurance,* was considered by competent critics to be almost, if not quite, as great a piece of acting as the Sir Harcourt of Harry Placide.

Some years ago—the exact year has slipped my recollection—Blake gathered a

company together with the intention of playing the old comedies in all the principal cities. The company was composed of the best talent he could secure—in fact each and every actor and actress of the major parts was an adept in his or her line, while those of the minor parts were not the sticks that are so often used to fill up a cast.

He reached Philadelphia with his company, in which city six performances were given, and to wretched houses. I was present at the last one, and never in my long life have I seen such a "beggarly account of empty boxes." At the close of the performance Mr. Blake stepped before the curtain, uncalled for, and made a speech. It was not very long, but it was a most remarkable one to fall from the lips of a manager to those who had honored him with their attendance: "Ladies and Gentlemen: I am delighted to say that the performance just ended will be our last in your City of Brotherly Love. Before we again visit it we will give its citizens time to become theatrically enlightened, in order that they may be

able to distinguish the difference between good and bad acting. Fearing, however, that this may not occur until the Crack of Doom, I bid you all a long farewell."

To say that the "ladies and gentlemen" present were astonished at the speech, would be drawing it too mild; they were shocked; and if its unadulterated impudence had n't robbed them of their breath they would probably have hissed the maker of it. However, to let out their indignation in that way might not have been wise. There were more people behind the curtain than in front of it, and Blake was just the man, and just in the mood, to marshal his stage forces and hiss the hissers out of the house.

The last time I saw Blake alive, was on a hot July afternoon. He was seated at the front window of his house with a cigar in his mouth, a palm-leaf fan in each hand and a big tumblerful of something standing on the window-sill. I might have supposed it to be ice-water, but there was a bunch of green sprigs sticking out of the top of it that killed any supposition of that kind.

"Why, Rufus," I said, "don't you know this is mid-summer? How is it you 're not out of town?"

"Out of town? Great God, my boy, is n't it hot enough here?"

He wiped the perspiration from his brow, bored his nose for a moment among the green sprigs, and I left him leaning back in his easy chair, panting like a dog and stirring up the hot summer air with his palm-leafs.

EDWIN FORREST.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

Edwin Forrest.

ON the list of the world's tragedians the name of Edwin Forrest stands, if not at the top, at least very close to it. As a man he was brusque in his manners, even to surliness, and had made many enemies among his profession, and more of them out of it than his popularity as an actor could placate. But it is as a wag that I now have to deal with him, and he was apt enough in that line to deserve the space and the record I have given him in these pages.

The reader may think it strange that the great impersonator of Lear and Macbeth and Metamora should step from his high pedestal, give Melpomene the cold shoulder, and condescend to amuse himself in the Thalian field of waggery. Yet he is not the only tragedian, nor by any means the only great one, that has condescended to do the same thing and to do it so well that biog-

raphy has made a note of it and would have been negligent if it had n't.

There have been many stories told of Forrest's waggish tricks, but I have learned, and from the lips of the tragedian himself, that the majority of them have no foundation for truth, save in the fertile brain of his fellow-actors.

The one which I will now give is not of this sort. I can vouch the truth of it, for I was the treasurer of Niblo's Garden, when and where it occurred, and my young assistant was the victim at whose head, or rather boots, Forrest launched the shaft of his waggery.

The tragedian, during his rehearsals, was exacting in many things and especially so in one—he insisted upon having the silence of the grave around him. He would tolerate no noise, nor sounds of any kind, save such as the speeches or the business of the play warranted.

One morning the rehearsal of King Lear was under way and had progressed as far as the fourth scene of the third act, when the

sound of squeaking boots caught the ear of Forrest. The boots had passed from the lobby of the theatre through the stage door and were leisurely taking their way along the passage back of the wings and toward the rear of the stage. John McCullough was the "Edgar" and had reached the middle of one of his mad speeches when Forrest suddenly interrupted him. "Hold, one moment, John, if you please. We will stop the rehearsal in order to give those boots an opportunity to get through with what they have to say."

McCullough paused long enough to permit the squeaking to die away in the distance and then took up Edgar's speech where he had broken it off: "Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy——," when Forrest again stopped him:

"D—n it man! Those are not shoes. Listen! There they go again. I will give any man a ten-dollar bill who will bring me, dead or alive, the owner of those boots!" However, as no man seemed anxious or will-

ing to try for the reward, the muscular tragedian told McCullough to finish his speech and, when he had done so, went on with his own, giving the opening line: "Why, thou wert better in thy grave," with forcible emphasis, and with a scowl in the direction of the offending boots as if he were ready to assist their owner into the portals of the other world.

I heard of the incident on the following morning, and turning to my assistant—who, I thought, was the probable owner of the boots—asked him if he had anything to do with it. He admitted that the boots were his and said that he had tried to soak the squeak out of them, but could n't succeed. "Then," I said, "for heaven's sake, take them off and travel in your stocking feet, if you again have occasion to go behind the scenes during a Forrest rehearsal."

While there is no doubt that the great tragedian possessed plenty of talent, it is also certain that he possessed plenty of muscle to back it up, if the play required it. And sometimes it did, or he thought it did,

if we may judge by the lavish display he made of it in Damon. In his impersonation of this character he had tried his muscle on more than one Lucullus and—so far as my knowledge serves me—none of them found enough delight in the experience to care for its repetition.

Let me give an illustration of the manner of his muscle.

In one of the New York theatres there was once an actor remarkable for his pygmean size, and also for his pygmean ability which never carried him beyond "My lord, the carriage awaits" and six dollars a week. He was a devoted worshiper of Forrest, and, whenever the latter played an engagement at the theatre, never failed to bore the manager with a request to cast him in some little part where he might have a chance to be on the stage with "the great Forrest." During one of the tragedian's engagements, the little actor—he was not five feet in height—came, as usual, to the manager, asking if he would n't give him a part in one of Forrest's plays.

"Give you a part! What can you do? What do you want?"

"Oh, any little part, if it's only a line, where I can be on in the same scene with Forrest."

"Well, I don't see how I can help you. The pieces for the week are nearly all cast and—stay;" here a sardonic smile twitched up the corners of the manager's mouth. "Do you think you could get through with Lucullus?"

"Lucullus?"

"Yes, Lucullus, in Damon and Pythias."

"I don't know; I never saw Damon played."

"Well, I'll give you a show and cast you for the part. It is short and therefore there's not much to study. There is some business in it, to be sure; but Forrest will post you up on this and help you through with it when the night comes."

The little actor was delighted, especially at rehearsal when the renowned tragedian seemed to take so much interest in showing him what to do and how to do it.

"You must stand just at this spot and speak your lines; when you get through I will seize you and put you off at first entrance."

"Is that all I will have to do?"

"Yes, that is all; but I think you will find it enough. Remember, when I take hold of you, you must give yourself up entirely to me."

When the night came the little actor took his stand near the wings dressed in spotless tights and a Roman tunic. He had gotten through tolerably well with what little he had to say in the first, second and third acts and stood waiting for his cue to go on in the fourth. When it came, he walked on and everything went swimmingly until Damon asked for his horse, and acted as if he thought Lucullus had the animal stowed away in the depths of his pocket. "Where's my horse?" and the horse not being produced, the angry Damon believed that the quickest way to get it would be to tear the little actor into pieces. Pouncing upon him, like a hungry tiger on a lamb, he lifted him

in the air, shook him from side to side, and then set him down on his feet. But it was only to get a better hold. Again he seized him and, turning him up, took him by the heels, and with a shout, "I'll throw thee with one swing into Tartarus," he whirled him around in Indian-club fashion, balanced him in the air a moment, and then flung him out through the first entrance and into an imaginary Tartarus in front of the prompter's box.

Disheveled, bruised, sore and astonished, there he lay trying to recover wind enough to get on his feet. One of his brother actors seeing his predicament helped him up, remarking: "Ah, Tom, my dear fellow, at last you have had your wish. You have played with Forrest."

"Played with Forrest? Not exactly," said Tom. "Forrest has played with me, and I don't think he'll get another chance."

Forrest, in the day of his prime, and before the gout got the upper hand of him, was a high liver and one of the heartiest of eaters. Entering a restaurant one day he

sat down at a table and called the waiter: "Bring me a beefsteak," was his order, and he gave it in such subterranean accents that the darkey stood spellbound, rolling up his eyes and showing his teeth.

"What are you grinning at? If you don't go for that steak, and be quick about it, I'll go for you and there'll be one less contraband in the world."

The darkey left, and when he returned with the order, it was "a small steak for one" which he placed before the tragedian. Forrest turned the steak over on the plate with the fork two or three times, examining it closely. Then he handed it back to the waiter. "Yes," he said, "that's what I want; that's beefsteak. The sample is all right; tell your master to send me some!"

William E. Burton.

I PRESUME the reader knows that there is such a disease as the Thespian fever; but whether he does or not, I had a sharp attack of it in my young days that led me—as it leads all others of its victims—to join an Amateur Dramatic Association. The latter was the most pretentious one of its day, and named the "Boothenian" in honor of the elder Booth. Some of its members, who "joined for the fun of it," afterwards took up the profession in earnest and became tolerably good actors. Whether any of them are now in the land of the living, or all are in the maw of "devouring Time," I am not prepared to say.

The rules of the association provided that there should be one performance every week during the winter season and that each member should be entitled to a night, choosing the play and any part in it that he preferred.

WILLIAM E. BURTON.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

There was no charge for admission to these performances. The public were invited to come "without money and without price" and enjoy what the Association's program modestly called "a histrionic treat." And they did come. Whether the "treat" always satisfied the palate of the public I cannot say; but as it cost them nothing they were generous enough to gulp it down with all the signs of satisfaction.

"Bombastes Furioso" was a dish which the Boothenians were in the habit of spreading for the entertainment of their patrons; but a tragedy of some sort—and the deeper the better—was the standard delicacy. Of my own attempts in the latter line I shall say nothing. A half-century has passed since then, and yet the bare recollection of them now causes a tingling blush to mount my cheek and a cold shiver to crawl up and down my back-bone.

What has all this to do with the subject of my chapter? Have patience, reader, and you will know.

Among the members of the Association

was a young fellow whom we recognized as Percy. What his other name was, or whether he had one, I never knew, nor did I have the curiosity to ask. When his name appeared on the night's program, it was simply "Percy." He insisted upon having it so, saying "it was good enough without a head before it, or a tail behind."

Percy had plenty of ambition, there was no doubt about that, but it had a streak of tragedy running through it which, unfortunately, Nature could n't have noticed when she shaped his legs. They were long and thin, a little bit crooked, and of the same diameter all the way up and down—except at the knee-caps, and these stuck out like sugar-bowls.

But Percy was no fool. He knew that Nature had either made an oversight in the shaping of his legs or else had intended him for an English snipe. Yet he did n't despair. Hunting up a regular stage costumer he ordered a pair of pads, or "shapes," as they are technically called.

"Now, Mr. Costumer," he said, "I should

like you to be careful. I don't want a pair of clumsy things that destroy all the natural beauty of a fellow's leg. Just soften down the curves a little."

Whether the costumer succeeded in "softening down the curves" to Percy's satisfaction, or not, I cannot say; but it was evident the legs were still there, for, whenever their owner appeared before the audience, they were always received with a round of hearty applause. Whether Percy took all this applause as a tribute to his genius, or gave his legs the credit for some of it, is something which he never divulged.

One night, after one of our performances, he called me aside and said:

"Do you know I am about to make a bold stroke?"

"A bold stroke? In what direction?"

"In the direction of the stage, of course."

"And how do you purpose beginning your stroke?"

"In this way; I shall call on Mr. Burton to-morrow and ask him if he won't give me an opening at his theatre."

"That is a rather bold stroke; but I wish you luck. Let me know to-morrow night how you succeed in it."

Burton, at that time, was the lessee and manager of the Arch Street Theatre of Philadelphia. When I saw Percy on the following night he told me he had called on Mr. Burton and—but stop; we will let Percy give the story of his interview and in his own words:

"Mr. Burton received me courteously, asking what he could do for me. I told him of my determination to earn my living on the stage, and that I would like him to give me an opening at his theatre. He eyed me a moment from head to foot and then asked if I thought I had enough perseverance to saw hickory wood all day long for ten cents a cord. I told him I did n't think my perseverance would stand a strain of that kind.

"'I suppose not,' he replied, 'and there may not be much glory in being a good woodsawyer; but, as you tell me it is a living you are on the lookout for, I can assure you that there are many actors to-day who

could earn a better living in that profession than they are now doing in their own. However, let me hear you read this speech of Hamlet's,' and opening the book he pointed to the soliloquy commencing with 'To be or not to be.'

"Now, I flatter myself that what I don't know about the melancholy Dane nobody else does. If you remember I played the part not a long while ago, and though the audience did n't seem to see the novelty and beauty that underlaid my conception of the part, that was their fault, not mine. I was not responsible for their stupidity and therefore not obliged to furnish them with brains."

"Of course not; but never mind that—go on with your story."

"Well, I began the speech with what I thought the proper emphasis and intonation, and had just reached the end of 'the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to,' when he stopped me:

" 'That will do, young man. It is plain that you have something in you, but it will

take a little time and a great deal of study to bring it out. How long have you been preparing for the stage?'

"'About one year,' I replied.

"'Only one year? Wonderful! Well, though I cannot give you an opening just now, I *can* give you a bit of good advice which will cost you nothing.'

"I thanked him kindly and then he continued:

"'Go home and study hard. Take Shakspere to bed with you. Read his Hamlet carefully, and weigh the sense of every line so that no hidden meaning may escape you. Ponder over his words the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. After breakfast take him up again and digest his lines until your dinner hour; but be careful to make that meal a light one; an overloaded stomach is apt to muddle the cranium and interfere with the free action of the brain.'

"'Is that all, Mr. Burton?'

"'Yes, I believe that is all.'

"'How long am I to keep up this study?'

"'Well, let me see—I think that ten years ought to be sufficient. At the end of that time you will be, unless my judgment is at fault, what neither Mr. Booth nor Mr. Forrest has as yet succeeded in being.'

"Here he broke off his sentence and, as he showed no sign of continuing it, I could not help asking the question: 'What will I be, Mr. Burton?'

"With a look that seemed to have a good deal of pity in it, he handed me my hat and replied:

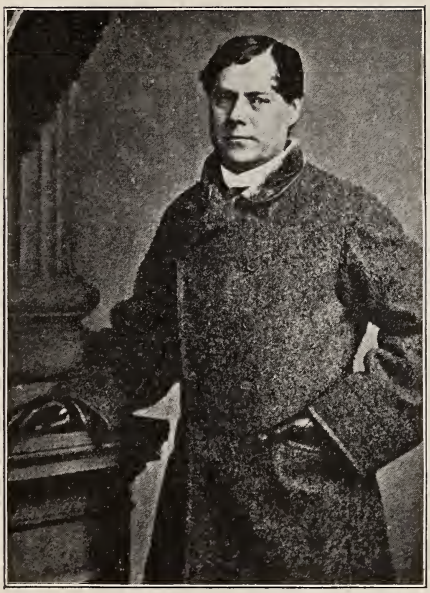
"'The worst actor the world has ever seen!'"

John Drew.

ALL Philadelphia theatre-goers of forty-five years ago, who are still alive, cannot but remember John Drew when he was associated with William Wheatley in the management of the Arch Street Theatre. He was the father of the present popular John—an actor who has fallen heir to enough of his sire's genius to make him one of the most distinguished stars of to-day.

John, the elder, was a comedian of great versatility. In light, low, or eccentric comedy his impersonations all bore the stamp of an artist. If a part demanded a touch of pathos—as in "The Irish Emigrant"—he could give the touch with power enough to sound the heart and tap the tears of the audience.

In private life he was social, unassuming and open-hearted. No needy actor ever



JOHN DREW.

From the collection of Charles N. Mann.

asked his aid in vain, and needy actors, in those days, were as plentiful as Falstaff's blackberries. They say that every man has his enemies, but I never knew that John had any—unless it were his own overly-warm heart.

However, it is not as a man, but as a wag that I now wish to speak of him, and in this character he was quite as much at home as in any of his others. One night, while in his dressing room at the Arch, he told me the following story which will show how sharp an edge he could put on a practical joke when he was in the vein:

Attached to one of the theatres as a "dresser" was a man named Allen. When the manager had an unimportant part and nobody else to substitute, Allen was taken from his occupation of "dresser" and put in to fill up the cast. Hence the company nicknamed him "Dummy Allen."

Now, Dummy was afflicted with a nondescript trouble in his speech. It was not exactly a hitch or an impediment, but a foggy, cold-in-the-head sort of pronunciation that

changed the form of his M's and N's and tumbled them out of his mouth in the shape of B's and D's. He was also troubled with another drawback; he was as deaf as a post —possibly a little deafer. A speech might be fired at his head with a Krupp gun and the "post" would be more likely to hear it than Dummy; therefore "cues" given in the ordinary way would have brought him no more information than if they had been uttered on the other side of the Atlantic. How then did he get over the difficulty? In a very simple manner. He kept his eye fixed on the other actor's lips and when they ceased to move Dummy knew it was his turn to go ahead.

Of course these little drawbacks of Dummy's were big enough to stand in the way of his ever becoming a star of the first magnitude. Still they did n't compel the manager to leave him out of the cast, although policy, and a decent regard for the nerves of the audience, required that the part given him should be of little or no importance.

It so happened that John Drew was one of the company in the same theatre with Dummy, and in one of the plays had a scene in which the latter came on as his servant. The servant had but two or three lines to speak and these were in answer to a speech of Drew's. Dummy stood watching his master's lips and waiting patiently for them to get through with their work and settle down. But they seemed determined not to settle down. Drew's love of waggery had got the better of him. After finishing his speech to Dummy he turned his head aside just enough to take his mouth from out the range of the eyes of the audience and then kept up a silent motion of his lips. An absolute quiet reigned on the stage and throughout the house. Dummy waited and wondered and the audience waited and wondered. Then a hiss from the latter warned the wag that he must put an end to his joke and let the play go on.

When they were both off the stage, Dummy, who had n't recovered from his wonder at Drew's long speech, asked him:

"Johd, what was the batter with that speech you bade? It was so dadb lawg I begad to thidk you'd dever fiddish!"

It will not be out of place here to speak of John's younger brother, Frank, who was a member of the Arch Street Theatre Company under his brother's management in 1853. Frank is still living and still playing, and 't would be hard to find to-day a more trenchant personator of character-parts than he.

WILLIAM J. FLORENCE.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

William J. Florence.

IT would be difficult to find, either in the profession or out of it, a more good-natured fellow than was Billy Florence. This was one of the traits of his character that endeared him to his friends—and their name was Legion. Yet, with all his good-nature, he held a rooted antipathy toward anything that had the savor of bulldozing. How he treated the latter, when he ran up against it, the following story will serve to illustrate:

During one of his engagements in Philadelphia he attended a convivial gathering of his fellow-professionals, and—as sometimes happens at gatherings of this sort—their devotions at the festive board were not over until long after midnight. So, when Billy left he thought the hour an improper one to return to the bosom of his family, and that his more judicious course would be to pass

the remainder of the night in a hotel. He was well acquainted with the host of one of these—the Washington House, which then stood on the north side of Chestnut street above Seventh. Entering the hotel he asked the night-clerk to let him have a room, and also to oblige him with a single-bedded one that he could have to himself.

The clerk looked over his register, and calling a servant gave him a key and directed him to "Show the gentleman to 34." Florence followed the servant up three flights of stairs and then his guide stopped before a room-door in which he tried his key. The door, however, was not locked, and when it was opened, Billy entered and found himself in a double-bedded room, one of the beds being already occupied.

"I thought I told the clerk to give me a room to myself. However, it does n't matter much. Light the gas and you may go."

Billy took off his coat and vest, put his watch and pocket-book under his pillow and then sat down by the side of the table, apparently absorbed in thought. Ten min-

utes passed and then his reverie was disturbed by a gruff voice from the occupied bed.

"When are you going to put out that light?"

With the pleasantest of tones Billy replied: "Presently, sir," and then resumed his attitude of thought.

Another ten minutes, and again came the voice from the other bed, and gruffer than before.

"If you don't turn out that light I'll find a way to make you, sir!"

Now Billy was a man of the mildest manners, and a polite request from the grum occupant of the bed would have quickly accomplished what his bulldozing was not destined to do.

"You'll find a way to make me? Well, my friend, go ahead; I did intend to oblige you by turning out the light; but as you are so crabbedly anxious about it I have changed my mind and shall let it burn till morning."

The fellow jumped from his bed, while Billy sat quietly at the table waiting for

some pugnacious demonstration of the method his gruff friend would adopt to carry out his threat. However, instead of showing any pugnacity he commenced dressing himself, interspersing his toilet operations with churlish snarls and black innuendos, all of which he hurled at the head of Billy.

"I know you, sir. You 're no better than you should be."

"Perhaps not," replied Billy; "but if I am as good as I should be, it is more than the world gives you the credit for. Did n't you notice that I took the precaution of putting my watch and pocketbook under my pillow? You see that I know you, too—By the way, those trousers of yours fit you splendidly. Might I ask who's your tailor?"

Without giving the comedian the desired information, his surly companion finished dressing himself and then bounced out of the room, banging the door behind him with a volley of sulphurous words that had no more serious effect upon Billy than to twitch up the corners of his mouth. Taking off

the remainder of his clothing the actor now got into bed, where he lay but a few minutes when the door of his room again opened and the hotel clerk entered.

"Mr. Florence, I made a mistake in giving you this room."

"Yes, I think you did. If I remember rightly I paid you for a room which I could have to myself, and instead of getting it, you gave me one in company with a bear."

"I am very sorry, sir, that I made the blunder; but there is a fine, large, airy room down on the second floor which you can have if you —"

"No, thank you; this one suits me now well enough. Besides, as my friend, the bear, has taken the trouble to dress himself from top to toe, don't you think it would be cruel to rob him of that fine, large, airy room on the second floor?"

The clerk left, leaving Billy master of the situation. However, instead of crowing over his victory he went to sleep and the first person to meet him in the morning was the host himself.

"Hello, Billy; is that you? I did n't know you were here over night. What room did the clerk give you?"

Florence told him the number.

"Is it possible? So it was you that created all that fuss last night?"

"No; if there was any fuss I think your clerk was the creator of it. By the way, who is my friend of the fuss?"

"Who is he? Well, I will introduce you to him. He professes to be a great admirer of yours."

"Admirer of mine? Well, he had a singular way of showing his admiration last night. However, you may introduce me."

The introduction took place, and afterwards Billy and his bear became acquaintances if not friends.

There is one joke of Billy's which his fellow-actors are fond of relating and which has more pathos in it than is usually found in jokes. The Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York was a favorite resort of the comedian and in his leisure moments it was here that his friends were pretty sure to find him. If

he needed "a shave" he never took it in any other barber shop than that of the Fifth Avenue, nor from the hand of any other barber than the one who had for years removed his beard, when it needed removal. It was a tender operation, for this same beard was thick and wiry, and the actor knew by experience that "Fritz" was the only man who could scrape it off without scraping a piece of his cheek with it.

Billy had been out of town for a couple of weeks, and on his return he sought the Fifth Avenue and entered the barber shop. He looked around for Fritz, but not seeing his tonsorial favorite, he turned to another knight of the razor with the inquiry: "Where's Fritz?"

"Why, Mr. Florence, I thought you knew all about it. Poor Fritz is dead."

"Dead?" echoed Billy, "I did n't know he was sick. When did he die?"

"Day before yesterday. He is to be buried to-morrow, and we are raising a subscription for a floral wreath. Could you give us a little help?"

"A little help? Certainly," said Florence; then, counting out twenty-five dollars from his pocket-book, he added: "Take that; and if it isn't enough you may call on me for more."

"Thank you, Mr. Florence; this will be quite enough. And now, since you have been so liberal, won't you kindly suggest an appropriate motto that we can place inside the wreath?"

Billy's face, which had been somewhat clouded at the news of Fritz's death, now brightened up.

"A motto? Yes, I have it—'Next!'"

And the motto was adopted.

The pathetic part of his joke lies in the fact that Billy himself was the "next" to answer the call and follow Fritz on his journey to

> "The undiscovered country from whose bourne
> No traveler returns."

"Mr. Jones."

JONES was not his name, but it will answer my purpose. His real one I withhold for charitable reasons. Time, long ago, rang down the curtain on his life, and I have no desire that the blazon of his questionable waggery should now cause his bones to blush and turn, uneasy, in their narrow bed.

At the time of which I speak—the early '50's—Jones was a member of the Walnut Street Theatre Company of Philadelphia. He was a shiftless fellow, and probably adopted the profession, not that he had any great love for it, but because he could get a foothold in no other. He had been on the stage for years, yet was still on the bottom round of the histrionic ladder, where he was content to remain rather than make an effort to climb higher. He held the position of "second walking-gentleman" and

was expected to take a hand at "general utility" when the business of the stage required it. His salary was eight dollars a week—not a princely remuneration, yet so long as it came with regularity his ambition was satisfied.

However his ambition and his pocket were two different things, and more than once did the latter rebel. More than once did its owner tumble into the clutches of "grim Necessity" and have to call in the aid of his ingenuity, to escape her sharp pinches. Fortunately, he had plenty of ingenuity, and none knew better how to use it.

The reader, if he be not too young, may perhaps carry his recollection back to the days when the paper-collar flourished in all its unstarched glory. It was not a favorite with the ultra-fashionables, but it was a blessing for the ultra-impecunious, and a blessing for which they were indebted to the ingenuity of Jones. His washerwoman one day disappointed him by not returning his clean linen, and, to cap her cruelty, absolutely refused to let him have a stitch of it

until old accounts were liquidated. The situation was desperate. He was cast in the farce for that night and in it he had some love-making to do. Now, he was well aware that no discriminating audience would tolerate an actor's making love minus his shirt-collar; and he was quite as well aware that an apologetic explanation of his washerwoman's cruelty would not be likely to mend matters. So when night came he asked the property man for a sheet of fools-cap, and this he cut in the shape of the latest fashionable four-ply and pinned it around his neck. He told me afterwards that he was not without a feeling of doubt whether the sharp eyes of the audience would not "tumble to the fake." (This bit of slang is his own, not mine, and is perhaps more forcible than any choice expression I could have substituted.) His doubt, however, was needless.

The audience swallowed the "fake" as credulously as if the collar were made of the best four-ply linen. Possibly, the part that Jones was playing might have blinded them

a little. He had a good deal to say in it about his big bank account; and when he was n't making love he was drawing checks with all the *sang-froid* of a millionaire. People who do this sort of thing are not in the habit of wearing paper collars.

But whatever it was that enabled him to pass his counterfeit, his invention turned out a decided success. Never afterwards did he have any fear that a washerwoman's cupidity would rob him of a clean collar. The secret soon leaked out, and, having no patent on his invention, some enterprising manufacturer took hold of it and the paper collar became a standard institution.

The ingenuity of Jones, however, was not always of the feasible sort. For instance, a fellow-actor—as slim in purse as himself—asked him if he could n't suggest a scheme that would put a little money in both their pockets.

"A scheme? Yes, I'm about hatching one now that will make us both rich."

"What is your scheme?"

"I 'm afraid you 'll blab."

"Blab? No, not if you take me in with you; does it take much cash?"

"Not a cent; there's the beauty of it."

"Well, don't keep a fellow in suspense; what is your scheme?"

"You 'll join me, then?"

"Certainly; I 've been hanging on the world by the eyelids long enough, and will do anything that promises a square meal oftener than once a month."

"Well, listen. You know, I suppose, that the French can beat the world in making theatrical wigs?"

"Yes, I 've heard so. What 's that to do with it?"

"Everything, my dear fellow. French wigs would sell in this country like hot cakes. Now, what I propose is this: You are to go over to Paris and buy up all the stage wigs you can find. It does n't matter whether they are new or second hand; then you are to —"

"Hold up, a moment, Jones; you said your scheme would n't require any cash."

"Certainly, Sam, I said so."

"Will you please tell me how a man can buy wigs, or anything else, without paying for them?"

"I did n't say you were not to pay for them. That is another beauty in my scheme. You are merely to pay for them in the currency of the country, and you must take over a cargo of these with you."

"A cargo of francs?"

"Sam, you are dull of comprehension. I said nothing about francs; I said the currency of the country—frogs' legs. Don't you know that a Frenchman would rather have —"

Sam turned on his heel without stopping to know what "a Frenchman would rather have." Nor did he wait for Jones to explain how he could get a "cargo of frogs' legs" without paying for them.

So much for the ingenuity of Jones; and now let us turn to a more vicious sample of his waggery.

Among the ballet girls belonging to the company was one on whom he had fixed a matrimonial eye. The girl was possessed

of some personal charms and his friends very naturally thought that these lay at the bottom of his attachment. But rumor thought otherwise, and, in fact, was not mealy-mouthed in saying that his attachment was built upon charms of a very different nature. And rumor, for once, was right. Jones—who was always ready to patch up his impecuniosity, and never very scrupulous in his manner of obtaining the patches—had discovered in some way that his charmer had four hundred dollars in a savings-bank. He thought it was a snug little sum and might be of use to him; and he also thought that the quickest and most honorable way to get hold of it would be to marry her. And he did. A few months went by, and so did the four hundred. Then it suddenly dawned upon him that he had made a mistake in marrying his charmer so hastily and thought that the quickest, if not the most honorable, way to remedy the mistake would be to leave her. And he did. The next morning after his desertion, he surprised his friends by the following ad-

vertisement which appeared in the personal column of one of the daily papers:

"Whereas my wife, Lucy Jones, has left my bed and board without just cause or provocation, all persons are cautioned against trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts of her contracting—or my own either—after this date. T. JONES."

Dryden observes: "We wink at wags when they offend," but the offence of Jones in his matrimonial scheme was a little too rank for even his friends to "wink at."

Now, although Jones was but a fourth-rate actor—or worse—and held an humble position in the company, yet he was not a man devoid of education. He was looked upon by his fellow-players as a shrewd theatrical critic; when he gave his opinion on their acting they accepted it as sound, and if their efforts received his approbation they were satisfied it was deserved. They were often the victims of his waggery, and he had a way of bringing it in when they were not looking for it. If one of them sought his approbation without deserving it he would

be apt to get something else, and his method of treating these undeserving ones was peculiar. He would lift up his victim's vanity to a giddy height and then drop it with a thud that usually knocked the bottom out.

One night after the performance one of the actors who, Jones thought, had a higher opinion of himself than was justified, asked him:

"Well, Jones, I had a difficult part to play to-night. I noticed you were standing in the wings watching me. What do you think of my conception of it?"

"It was extraordinary!" said Jones.

"I am glad to hear you say so, for you understand its difficulty. Now, tell me candidly, did you ever see the part played as well?"

"To be candid with you," said Jones, "I have, in my time, often seen the part played, and occasionally played worse—but d—d little!"

Here is another sample of his lifting and dropping process:

A new member had been added to the

company and Jones was not long in finding out his weak points and taking his measure for a joke. There was one thing which Jones could n't tolerate—vanity—and the newcomer was full of it. When in the green-room he would stand before its mirror, and devote his time, between the calls, to admiring the shape of his legs. Jones could see nothing in them worthy of admiration and resolved that he would tell their owner so should an opportunity come. It did come. His victim was standing in the wings one night waiting for his cue, when Jones, who was not far away, burst out with a flash of admiration, seemingly intended for the ear of the prompter, to whom he had been talking, but quite loud enough for his victim to hear:

"What a wonderful pair of legs that man has! They alone ought to make his fortune."

The owner of the legs turned round and Jones walked up to him:

"I beg pardon, sir; if I am too inquisitive, Mr. ————, you must n't think hard of

me, but lay the blame where it belongs. Nobody could look upon the shape of those legs of yours without being inquisitive. Pray tell me, sir, do you pad?"

With a look of pride and a smack of satisfaction on one of the legs in question, the victim replied:

"I pad? What a question! No, indeed, sir; not I!"

"Well, I thought not; but—"

Here Jones paused.

"But what, sir?"

"Oh, nothing; I was merely about to remark that—you ought to!"

H. L. Bateman.

BATEMAN, in his younger days, had been an actor of some ability, but later in life he gave up the stage. He was the father of the "Bateman Children," Kate and Ellen. As child actresses they became celebrated, and were such an attractive feature that the various managers seldom left them without an engagement. Their reading was faultless, their knowledge of stage business phenomenal, and, taken altogether, their acting was such that stage prophets predicted the rise of twin stars, already above the horizon and about to flash their lustre across the theatrical firmament.

The prediction was not wrong regarding one of them. When Kate had grown to womanhood, her father saw that her talent for the stage had grown with her, and at once determined to bring her out as a star. He devoted all his time and attention to the

making and managing of her engagements and no manager could have been more shrewd. As a man he was good-natured and easy-going; peculiar in some of his ways, it is true, yet those who knew him best and understood his peculiarity had no trouble in getting along smoothly in their business relations with him.

He made an engagement for Kate to play at Niblo's Garden, but not being satisfied to have her make her appearance in any of the old plays he determined to have a new one written expressly for her. This was done—Augustin Daly, then a reporter on the New York *Express,* being the author. The title of the play was "Leah, the Forsaken," and it proved a great success, adding to the already established fame of Kate as an actress, and also to her bank account as well as to that of Niblo's.

I have said that Bateman was a shrewd manager, and one evidence of his shrewdness was that he never allowed the audience to pass over his daughter's acting without applause, whenever she made a point that he

thought deserved it. Applause is the pabulum that nourishes the efforts of a dramatic artiste, and none knew the fact better than Bateman. It was his custom to seat himself in the parquet as soon as the curtain rose, and then, with his eye and ear fixed on Kate, to start the needed plaudits when the proper moment came.

I was in the parquet one night when he came in and sat down two or three seats in front of me. He always wore a very tall stove-pipe hat, and now, without removing it, he sat waiting for his daughter to make her entrance. Directly behind Bateman sat a gentleman who was busily dodging his head from side to side in his endeavor to get a glance at the stage around the edges of the high hat in front of him. Finding that his dodging was fruitless he leaned over and, in a very mild and polite tone, said: "Won't you please, sir, to take off your hat; I can scarcely see anything." Bateman looked round at his questioner, smiled, and quite as politely replied: "Certainly, sir; with pleasure."

Now, Bateman had a very remarkable head of hair—remarkable both in its quality and quantity. It was wiry and stiff, of a sour-crout tint and stood straight up in a manner to excite wonder how it was possible for the stove-pipe, tall as it was, to accommodate it.

After nodding pleasantly to his petitioner behind him, and removing his hat, he ran his fingers, with an upward movement, through his hair, and then bent his looks attentively on the stage. A few minutes passed and then he felt a gentle tap on his shoulder accompanied with another request from his polite friend behind him:

"I am very sorry, sir, to give you so much trouble; but will you be kind enough to put on your hat again? I can't see anything at all now!"

When Bateman came in the box office next morning, I told him of the incident I had witnessed and asked him "Who's your friend?"

"I don't know who he is," he replied, "but I *do* know he is mighty hard to please!"

Sam. Hemple.

SAM was a Philadelphian, and,—in the opinion of every Quaker City play-goer of twentv-five or thirty years ago —an ideal low comedian. That was not only their opinion but they were sure of it. "Burton? What is Burton compared with our Sam? A rush-light to the sun!" As for Toodles, they said Sam's had more laughs in it to the square inch than Burton's to the square mile. Perhaps they were right. It is rather late in the day to discuss it, so I will leave Burton out of the question and turn my attention to Sam alone. Although his line was low comedy yet he did venture to stray from it, on one or two special occasions, and enter the solemn domain ot tragedy.

Now, to look at Sam you would have to look a long while to see anything tragic about him. His total avoirdupois was some-

SAM HEMPLE.

From the collection of Charles N. Mann.

thing in the neighborhood of three-hundred. His body was shaped like a football and underneath it was a pair of legs so short that they seemed to have been driven in by the solid three-hundred pounds of pressure above.

He had played Falstaff several times and when he did he had all the needed flesh without bothering the costumer for an artificial stomach of rubber and wind; and when he gave Jack's lines: "What a thing should I have been when I had been swelled!" the audience were satisfied that he meant what he said and knew what he was talking about.

I have mentioned that it was on a special occasion only that he ventured into tragedy, and this would be when the time came around for his benefit. He knew that his friends, as well as the general public, expected something novel, something entirely out of the ordinary rut, when "Sam Hemple" took a benefit, and he was sure to give it to them.

On the approach of such an event Sam never forgot to give me a week's notice, ac-

companied with a five-dollar package of tickets, one of which I was expected to make use of, and do anything I pleased with the others—except to return them to him. I told him one day that I thought his benefits were coming rather close together. "Close together?" he echoed, "Twice a year—do you call that close? I tell you, my dear fellow, when a man is the owner of half-a-dozen little pigs that are always clinging to his coat-tail and squealing for bread and butter and a pair of solar-tips, his benefits can't come too close together."

There was one of these benefits that I particularly remember. The walls of the whole city and its suburbs were thickly plastered with huge posters announcing the event two weeks ahead. Passers-by would stop and read and stare with a grin when they came to the line in big letters: "Balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet, Sam Hemple, for this occasion only, as Romeo."

'T was indeed a bold undertaking for Sam. However handy his football body and short legs might come in for Falstaff they were

likely to prove a little in the road of Romeo. But confidence is everything and Sam had plenty of it. "Play Romeo? Of course I can. The public really don't know what I *can* do, and I intend to show 'em." Thus he spoke to one of his friends; and he did "show 'em" and also showed them some new and remarkable readings of Shakspere.

We have a multitude of scholiastic individuals, called "Shaksperean annotators," who insist that when the Bard said anything which the world could n't comprehend, he must have intended to say something else, and the intelligent, old-time compositors would n't let him. Now Sam was no scholiast, yet probably was as able as the ablest to tell the world what that "something else" was.

But, "to return to our mutton."

When the night came and the curtain rose on the balcony scene, there was a tremendous burst of applause. Juliet stood there with her gaze fixed lovingly down on her Romeo, who was now bending his body, as gracefully as its circumference would allow,

in acknowledgment of the applause. When it ceased Sam turned around and lifting his eyes toward his Juliet on the balcony commenced his lines: "See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand! O that I were a glove upon that hand that I might touch that cheek." He stopped a moment to give Juliet time to sigh and say "Ah Me!" and then went on:

"She speaks!
O, speak again, bright angel, for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a winged Messenger of Heaven
Unto the white upturned wondering eyes
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-passing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air."

Thus far all went smoothly. Then Juliet begins to grow inquisitive and asks a question which her Romeo is not as yet prepared to answer:

"O, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"

Sam paused, took his eyes from his Juliet, and cast them inquiringly over the parquet and around the tiers of boxes, as if he thought it necessary to count up their contents before he could satisfactorily answer her question.

Then bringing his eyes back again to Juliet he spoke:

"I'll tell thee love, but not to-night;
Ere set of the to-morrow's sun I'll know
What now is hid behind the veil
Of secrecy. This seems a goodly house
And on the boodle's count I hope to show
Good cause why I to-night am Romeo."

Another problem now puzzled her. How was it possible for that three-hundred pounds of sweetness to get "over the garden wall"? She was determined to know.

"How cam'st thou hither? Tell me and wherefore;
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb."

Sam was quite willing to enlighten her, but could n't do it truthfully and stick to the text. So he changed the latter.

"'With Love's light wings did I o'erperch them;'
So Shakspere says; and doubtless such a plan
Might do for common Romeos; but I
That am not shaped for perching walls nor made
For sportive tricks"—

Here Sam struck a snag. He found he was getting Romeo mixed up with Richard and as he couldn't play both parts at once he snapped the thread of his blank verse and wound up his information in pure prose.

"Well, Miss Juliet, as I don't want to keep you out all night and give you your death of cold, I'll cut the matter short. Shakspere's plan would never work with a Romeo of my calibre. Oh no! If I had waited for the aid of Cupid's wings to lift me over that fence you wouldn't have seen me here till Doomsday. I found the back gate open!"

Sam's versatility and ambition, it seems, didn't end with his performance of Romeo. On one occasion he said to me: "Romeo? pooh! pooh! Anybody can play Romeo; but Juliet, that's another matter. Charlotte Cushman once said: 'The part of Juliet is the most difficult one in the whole range of Shakspere's female characters, and no actress can grasp its underlying subtlety and play the part until she has grown too old to look it.' That was Charlotte's opinion, and I don't dispute it; but I intend to show the

public some day, what I can do with it. I may be too young to 'grasp its underlying subtlety,' but you can bet your bottom dollar, if you have one, that I will give 'em more Juliet for their money than their sweet philosophy ever dreampt of!"

P. T. Barnum.

BARNUM says, in his book of "Forty Years' Recollections," "I began the world with nothing and barefooted at that." If this be so—and we have no reason to doubt his word—he deserves a mighty deal of credit for the pluck with which he battled with the world and laid it at his feet.

The showman never was an actor, although he tells us he was once forced to "black up" and go on as a substitute for one of his negro minstrels that left him in the lurch. Taking this into consideration, together with the fact of his having been long and closely connected with the stage, I feel justified in giving his name a place on the list in its wags.

Barnum started his life as a showman in 1835 by exhibiting Joyce Heth, the hundred-and-sixty-one-year-old negro who was declared to have been the nurse of George

P. T. BARNUM.

From the collection of James D. Slade.

Washington. Whether she ever had been or not made but little difference so long as a confiding public believed that the shriveled old creature they were gazing at had dandled in her arms the babe that was destined to be the father of its country.

Barnum was the Prince of Showmen, and also the Prince of Humbugs—if we are to believe the man himself. This, however, was no discredit to him, but rather the reverse. A showman's chief duty, as well as his policy, is to please the public and humor their whims and wants. Barnum knew how to do both. He had n't been long in the business before he saw that they had a ravenous appetite for humbug. "That's the sort of food they're hungry for, is it? Well, I'll give it to 'em fresh from the griddle!" And he did. He scoured the world for his humbug, opened a museum and filled it with the freaks he had gathered from every quarter of the globe—freaks which the unsophisticated public believed that Nature had been guilty of. Such a belief was a cruel slander on the good Dame. It is true, she has been

guilty of doing some queer things, and, possibly, of making some mismatches; but I don't think she ever created a mermaid by sewing the tail of a fish on the body of one of her monkeys.

Outside and away from his business the showman had a hobby which he took great delight in riding—the Temperance cause. It never had a stronger advocate than he, nor one who had made more convincing speeches in its favor. He could paint the evils of intemperance—"the hellish habit of rum-swigging" he called it—in colors vigorous enough to cause the moderate drinker to stick to his ice-water straight, and the toper to lose all appetite for his morning cocktail.

Such was the burden of his speeches, and never, but once, did I have reason to doubt that his honest convictions were at the bottom of them. The story of that doubt may interest the reader.

It was somewhere in the '60's that New York's theatrical managers, of whom Barnum was one, began to grow alarmed over the repeated demands of their orchestras for in-

creased salaries. To fight the situation successfully they decided to form a "Union," which they did under the title of "The Board of Associate Managers of New York." They now felt strong enough to threaten their greedy fiddlers that if there were any more cries for increased salaries they would abolish their orchestras, hire a piano, and get along without fiddlers.

The Board met once a month, or oftener if occasion required, in its rooms at the Metropolitan Hotel. These rooms had been expressly fitted up for the convenience of the managers and nothing was omitted that would tend to cater to their ease and comfort.

At the far end of one room was a recess, the interior of which was concealed by a pair of damask curtains; not entirely concealed, however, for between the folds of the drapery a sideboard could be seen, with shelves that glistened with a spread of cut-glass decanters, and goblets, and tumblers; all of which indicated that however timid a New York manager might be in some things, he was

not afraid "to put an enemy in his mouth" even at the risk of being robbed of his brains.

I was present at one of the Board's meetings, as a deputy of the manager of Niblo's who was unable to attend. Barnum was also there, and I was curious to know how the great advocate of Temperance would look upon the contents of that recess, and how he would conduct himself after the Board had finished its labors and was ready to take a spiritual rest.

My curiosity had n't long to wait. The Board hurried through its business, which was not of great importance, and then all the managers rose from their seats and started in single file for the recess. I should have said all but one. Barnum stuck to his chair. Perhaps, under the circumstances, he thought his chair the safest place for a temperance orator. But whatever he thought, there he sat, twiddling his thumbs, but otherwise as immovable as the Rock of Gibraltar. Then I saw Lester Wallack turn back, walk toward him, and speak in a low but earnest tone:

"Come, Mr. Barnum, drop your cold-water notions and join us 'for this occasion only' in the frivolities of life."

Barnum said nothing in reply; but I saw a twinkle in his eye as he rose from his chair and followed Lester to the sideboard around which the other managers were standing. Then the entertainment began. All had filled their glasses, except Barnum, who stood looking on in silence, but with no indication that he intended to make bibulous use of the glass before him.

Again, with his hand grasping the neck of a decanter, Lester spoke:

"You are too bashful, Mr. Barnum; allow me to—"

But the showman gently pushed the decanter aside and said:

"Excuse me, Mr. Wallack. You know my record, and I am sure you will respect my intention of keeping it up. It has been the boast of my life that no man has ever seen a drop of anything stronger than water pass my lips. Be kind enough to turn your backs!"

And they turned. When they turned again the showman's glass was still empty, and whether it had been anything else during the brief time it was out of their sight, none of them knew, and all of them were too considerate to ask.

Now, I know not what the private opinion of those managers may have been regarding the showman's empty glass, but my own conviction is that it was guiltless of any other condition than emptiness. He had worn his cold-water habit too long, and was too proud and careful of its integrity to permit the toes of conviviality to tread on the tail of it. The bright twinkle which I saw in his eye was never the reflection of cut glass decanters, though it might have resulted from reflection of another sort: "This job-lot of old managers to be sold!" And he sold 'em.

Charles M. Barras.

ALTHOUGH Barras could hardly be classed among the stage celebrities of the day, yet he was by no means a bad actor. Eccentric comedy was his line and in this he reached a certain degree of popularity, if not of fame. He was the author of several dramas, but none of them added either to his fame or his pocket, save one—The Black Crook. While this was being played at Niblo's Garden and in the height of its success Barras had his headquarters at the St. Nicholas Hotel. Here he was besieged, day and night, by speculating managers who were anxious to purchase the right to play the "Crook."

One morning, about sunrise, one of these ambitious managers stepped up to the hotel office with the inquiry:

"Can I see Mr. Barras?"

"He is in bed now, I think."

"Well, I must see him at once on a matter of the greatest importance to him. If you will be kind enough to send up for him, I will wait in the parlor till he comes down."

Now Barras was not an early bird. He was fond of his bed, his usual time of getting out of it being about 10 o'clock. To be roused at sunrise and have his morning's nap broken in halves was something he hadn't been used to. However, when he was told that a gentleman was in the parlor waiting to see him on "most important business," he got out of bed.

"Tell the crank I'll be down directly."

Then with an oath or two he dressed himself and with his wrath at boiling heat he walked down stairs and into the parlor.

His greeting of the manager was warm.

"What the d—l do you mean, sir, by hauling me out of bed at this hour? Is the hotel on fire?"

"I beg pardon, Mr. Barras; I was most anxious to see you on a business matter and wanted to be sure of catching you in."

"Catching me in? Catching me in bed, I

suppose you mean. Well, now you have caught me there, what do you want?"

"I would like to purchase the right to play the Black Crook."

"Play the Black Crook? Play it where?"

"Oh, in any city; I'm not particular which one."

Barras' wrath now began to cool; not because he saw the chance of pocketing a thousand or two, but because he was fond of a joke and saw an opportunity of getting one in at the expense of his early applicant.

"So you want to play the Black Crook and are not particular where?"

"If you please, Mr. Barras."

"Well, let me see; your chances, I think, are slim." (Here he took from his pocket a paper, running his eye over it and mumbling to himself its supposed contents.) "New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburg, Mobile, Memphis, Richmond, Omaha—I am very sorry, sir; every city and town is—stop a moment, I am

wrong. I have one left, and since you say you are not particular it may be just the one you're looking for."

The manager congratulated himself that his early call had shut out some other fellow, and eagerly asked:

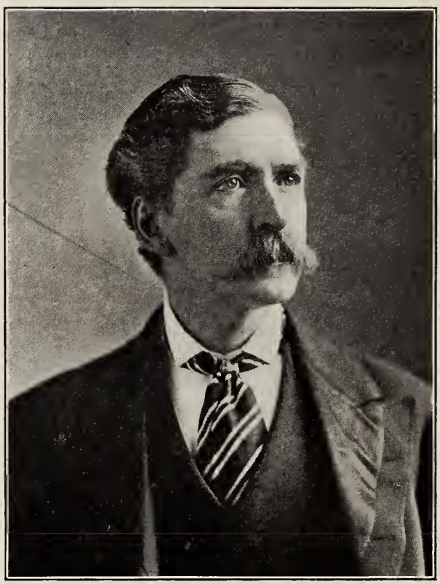
"What is the name of the city, Mr. Barras?"

Folding up his paper and returning it to his pocket the Crook's author replied, "Sitka."

The manager reached for his hat.

"Well, Mr. Barras, I believe the population of Sitka now consists principally of Polar bears and icebergs and I don't think they would take much interest in the Black Crook. I bid you good morning."

"Good morning, sir," and Barras went back to his bed to mend his broken nap.



EDWARD A. SOTHERN.

Edward A. Sothern.

SOTHERN had no equal as an eccentric comedian; nor had he any as a wag, unless it were Brougham. At one time it was a matter of doubt, with the friends of both, which was "the verier wag o' the two;" but the verdict was finally rendered in favor of Sothern, who thenceforth was dubbed the "Prince of Wags." His waggery, however, differed materially from that of Brougham. John's humor was polished and his jokes so full of innocence that they fell upon their victim without bruising his feelings or ruffling his self-esteem. Ned's waggery had no polish nor did it need any. His jokes were of the practical type—painfully practical. He always had a quiver full of the sharp-pointed shafts and he shot them out without being particular whom or where they hit. Friend or foe 't was all the same to Ned. He would sell either, although if he had to choose

between them the friend was sure to be the victim. "What's the use of a friend if you're not permitted to sell him?" was his argument, and all of them had cause to know that he was not backward in making this friendly use of them. Yet they did n't grumble. They thought that a warm heart lay under all his waggery; and it did—so warm, indeed, that when he found that one of his jokes had jarred a sensitive chord in a friendly breast, his own was filled with regret and never at rest until he had sent his victim a sop to soothe the jar. These sops were generally in the shape of a costly gift, and Billy Florence is my authority for saying that they were innumerable enough to run away with Sothern's money almost as fast as Dundreary brought it in.

But, as a rule, his friends submitted meekly to the selling, and occasionally would attempt to retaliate by doing a little of it on their own account. However, they were not so apt at selling as at being sold and usually came out second best.

Before we follow Sothern through the

twists of his waggery, let us have a word or two about himself as an actor and how he came to choose the stage for a profession.

Sothern was born in England. The year of his birth has slipped my memory but the day of it he has himself told us, and in a way to make it memorable. "I came into the world on the first day of April, and that may account for Dundreary and his brother Sam being such infernal fools!"

Sothern's love for the stage began early. He was yet a boy when the desire to be an actor sprouted in his breast and soon crowded out the growth of other aspirations. His father, who looked with horror on the profession, pleaded with his boy and used every argument to turn the current of the little fellow's ambition into another channel. He wished to make a preacher of him or a lawyer, but Ned was stubborn. "No, Dad," he said, "I would make a poor soul-saver and a worse lawyer. I'll be an actor or nothing!" So there was no other course left for "Dad" save to yield his ground and let the boy have his way.

A few years passed and then we find him a member of an Amateur Dramatic Association. Of this he soon became the "bright particular star"—I mean its tragic star. As for comedy, he would have none of it, for he thought the domains of Thalia were too cramped for the spread of his genius. Melpomene was his chosen Muse. He would mount her broad shoulders and trust to her to carry him up and perch him on the top-round of the Thespian ladder. A strange hallucination; and equally strange is it that many other of the world's greatest comedians started upon their career, confident that Nature had cut them out for tragedians, and —like Sothern—treading stubbornly the wrong road, until the finger post of Chance pointed out the right one.

It was while he was in the budding years of his stage ambition that a philosophic friend volunteered this advice: "You intend to go on the stage? Well, no man can get along in that profession without push, and no actor can push very hard unless he himself be hard-pushed. If the price of a

dinner is always in his pocket, when he needs a dinner, what's the use of his working for it? No, my young friend, money is the millstone that hangs around the neck of success. If you are so unfortunate as to have any of it, the sooner you get rid of the millstone the better—that is, if you ever expect to become a great actor."

This anomalous bit of advice was not hard for Sothern to follow. It was just in his line, for his nature was of that easy-going sort that looks out for to-day and lets to-morrow take care of itself. He had some ready cash and without delay proceeded to get rid of it. When his "millstone" had shrunk to the size of a shilling, he thought he was properly cocked and primed to start on the theatrical road to fame, which he did by joining a company in a little country town. Here under the name of Stuart he played a variety of parts, proving that he possessed remarkable versatility if not extraordinary genius.

After a few years' experience on the English stage, he resolved to come to

America, where his name was already favorably known to our theatrical managers. He first appeared in this country at one of the Boston theatres, not as a star but as a member of the company, and still retaining his stage name of Stuart. On his opening night, strange to say, he failed to please the audience and therefore failed to please the manager. He was not discouraged—his obstinate perseverance, and faith in his own capacity prevented anything of that kind—but rather than waste his time in fighting with an unpropitious beginning, he came to New York and accepted an engagement at Barnum's Museum. At the end of his engagement wth Barnum, he played as a stock actor in several other cities at various times and finally settled down with Lester Wallack's company. Here he dropped the name of Stuart and resumed his own. He remained with Wallack for several seasons, and then signed a contract with Laura Keene, whose theatre was then on Broadway. This was the break 'o day for his fame and fortune, and both came to him in this way:

During rehearsal one day Miss Keene said to him: "Mr. Sothern, I am about to ask a favor of you; will you do it?"

"Certainly, Miss Keene; what is it?"

"I am in a quandary. Next week I will be forced to put on a play as a stop-gap, and I would like you take part in it."

"What is the play?"

"Our American Cousin; and I have no other gentleman in the company than yourself to cast for the part of Lord Dundreary."

"Well, Miss Keene, I have never read the play but will take it home and let you know to-morrow."

Now, Tom Taylor has written many good plays, but "Our American Cousin" is not one of them. Asa Trenchard is supposed to be the chief character, while Dundreary flounders through the forty or fifty insipid lines which the author has given him and which Sothern was not slow to see would add but little to the reputation of the unlucky actor whose lot it would be to speak them. So he told Miss Keene he was sorry he could not accept the part.

"But, Mr. Sothern, what am I to do? I have no other piece and as I do not wish to close my theatre for a week, I do hope you will oblige me by consenting to play the part."

Her plea was so earnest and warm that the soft heart of Sothern began to melt.

"Well, Miss Keene, I will oblige you and play the part, but on one condition."

"Only one condition? Name a dozen if you like. What is it?"

"To say what I like in the lines and arrange them to suit myself."

"I have no objection to that. If I may put your name on the bills as Dundreary, you may rewrite the whole part if you choose."

And he did rewrite it. He filled the vapid part with life and a mass of delicious absurdity that saved the play and laid the foundation of his fame and fortune.

Of course, none other than the brain of a wag could create a Dundreary, and we naturally look for ebullitions of the actor's waggery off the stage when he drops his profes-

sional work to indulge in it. And he often did.

I have said that in the distribution of his jokes he never forgot his friends. Billy Florence was one of them, and a most intimate one, therefore he was a frequent victim of Ned's waggery—and, perhaps, the only victim who could properly appreciate it. To do this required an abundance of good nature, and Billy had enough of that article to meet all demands.

One night, in the box-office of Niblo's, he told me how Sothern had played one of his jokes upon him, but told it in such an unctuous way I thought he rather liked the experience and would n't have missed it for the world.

"Yesterday morning," he said, "I was awakened by a loud yelping and barking of dogs in the street, and directly in front of my house. I jumped out of bed, raised the window sash, and looking out saw a strange crowd of men and boys that reached from the stoop of my house to the curb on the opposite side of the street. I say a *strange*

crowd, for every man and boy had a dog under his arm or else was provided with a basket piled up with a litter of pups. I have seen not a few dog-shows in my day, but never a one that could boast of a greater variety of the canine tribe. There were pugs and poodles, spaniels and collies, pointers and setters, rat-terriers and skye-terriers, mongrels and full breeds—in fact, I don't think there was any of the whole tribe that did n't have a representative, either in a whelp or a full-grown form.

"As I put my head out of the window and looked over the crowd, every fellow in it held up his dog with a shout: 'Here he is, Mr. Florence; this is the fellow you are looking for, and you can have him cheap.'

"With a puzzled head I turned round to Mrs. Florence, who had also been drawn to the window by the racket beneath it: 'Can you imagine, my dear, the meaning of all this?'

" 'The meaning? Yes, it is plain enough to me; this is another of Ned Sothern's jokes. And, look, there he is himself!'

"Yes, there he was, standing on the opposite side of the street, without a smile on his face, and looking as innocent as a country clown. Putting on his eye-glasses, he stared at me a moment, and then turning to a boy who was holding up a yellow cur for my approval, I heard him ask, 'Can you tell me, my lad, who lives in this house, and who is that queer person who is shaking his fist at us?'

" 'Why, don't you know? Billy Florence, the actor lives there, and he advertised this morning for some dogs.'

" 'Oh, I understand now,' said Sothern. 'He is tired of acting and is going into the dog business.'

"Then with a dreamy, unrecognizing glance at me through his eye-glasses, he walked leisurely down the street.

"I was curious to see the advertisement that had drawn such a crowd, and picking up the morning's *Herald* found this one among the wants:

" 'The advertiser is in want of a number of dogs, including spitz, skye-terriers, black-

and-tans, setters, collies, poodles, etc. Dog dealers or others can apply at my residence from seven o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon. W. J. FLORENCE.'"

Sothern's jokes were not always premeditated. They would pop out sometimes when they were least expected, and he would see opportunities to wedge them in that would be invisible to the ordinary joker. On one occasion he entered a hardware store with a friend, and with the original intention of buying a file. As soon as the clerk approached, Sothern saw a chance for a joke, and he couldn't resist it.

"What is it you want, sir?" asked the clerk.

"I want to purchase a set of Fielding's Works," said Sothern.

"Then you had better go to a bookseller; this is a hardware store."

"Oh, I'm not particular about the binding; if you have n't it in calf, cloth will do."

"But I tell you, sir," said the clerk, raising his voice, "we don't sell books."

"Four volumes, you say? Well it does n't

matter whether it is in four volumes or four dozen. Let me have it."

Clerk (still raising his voice), "I tell you, sir, this is not a bookseller's."

"No, you need n't send it home. Wrap it up and I'll take it with me."

"Sir," shouted the man, "don't I tell you that this is a hardware store? We don't sell books."

"Oh, I don't care what you wrap it in. Brown paper will do; the sort of stuff your grandmother uses to wrap up her pickles."

The clerk was now convinced that his queer customer was either very hard of hearing or a lunatic; and, as he was rather inclined to believe that the latter was the difficulty, he went to the rear of the store and asked his employer to come forward and help him wait on a crazy man. The proprietor then walked toward Sothern, and in a gentle tone of voice, intended to be soothing to the shaky mind of a lunatic, said: "What can I do to oblige you, sir?"

"Well," replied Sothern, in an equally gentle tone, "I wish to purchase a small file

about six inches long; but your clerk does n't seem to understand me. Have you such a thing?"

"Certanly, sir," said the proprietor, and handed out the file. Then he turned to the clerk, with a look of pity and a side-speech: "I think the crazy man is on the other side of the counter."

Sothern then picked up his purchase and walked out with his friend.

During the wag's engagement at Laura Keene's a huge practical joke was played upon the credulity of the New Yorkers, and they were not a little curious to discover the father of it. It was known as the "Professor Biglie Hoax," and bore all the features of being the offspring of Sothern's facetious brain. He denied the fatherhood, however, but his friends accepted his denial with a very big grain of salt. They were satisfied, as everybody else was disposed to be, that no other wag than Sothern could invent a joke that would befool so many Gothamites. It does seem rather strange that in a city containing so much worldly wisdom and

wickedness, a joke of such a character could find enough innocent credulity to feed upon. But it did find it and in this way. In all the daily papers, and in flaring posters, the following announcement astonished the eye of the reader:

Flight Extraordinary!

During the past few years science has taken such long and rapid strides that nothing seems to be beyond its reach. What is deemed impossible to-day, becomes an accomplished fact to-morrow. We talk now across the ocean, and there is a flattering prospect that we will soon be able to fly across it, and in a much shorter time than it now takes steam to transport us.

The undersigned, after years of study and experiment, has invented a means of navigating the air. He uses no balloon or other gas-filled machine, but wings his flight after the manner of a bird, and quite as safely, and nearly as swiftly. He will give an exhibition to-morrow, at ten o'clock precisely, taking his flight from the top of Trinity Church steeple, across to Jersey City and back. He expects to make the round trip in less than three minutes.

Prof. Cantell A. Biglie.

Curiosity not only nibbled at the bait, but swallowed it, hook and all. Long before 10 o'clock a crowd began to gather in front of the church, and when the hour arrived for the professor's flight, that part of Broadway

was completely blocked by a mass of impatient humanity, with their eyes fixed on the top of Trinity's steeple, expecting every moment to see him emerge and take his "flight extraordinary."

But he did n't emerge. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and then some fellow in the crowd shouted, "The professor is coming out on the other side of the steeple." But as there are four sides to every steeple, the crowd were in doubt which way they ought to rush. Some hurried in one direction and some in another, until a loud voice uttered three words, which relieved them of their doubt: "First of April."

It was really astonishing to find how many people there were in that crowd who had never heard of the professor, and did n't care a continental whether he flew or not. They said they were there on business, and judging from the way in which they hurried into the various shops and brokers' offices, maybe they were. Anyhow, if they had been curious enough to dissect the professor's signature at the bottom of his advertisement,

they would have learned that even a Professor *Can-tell-a-big-lie.*

Sothern died twenty years ago, leaving behind him a distinguished successor in his son, Edward H., whose name and fame as a star have now the world's due recognition.

James Quin.

ONE of the famed actors of the English stage, in the middle of the Eighteenth century, was James Quin. He was the great Falstaff of his day, and greater in the part than had been any of his predecessors, with the exception of Betterton. But Quin was famous, not alone as an actor, but as a duelist, an epicure and a wag. He was ever ready with his sword to resent an insult, and, in consequence, had three encounters—in two of which his adversaries paid the penalty of the insult with their lives. His epicureanism was unquestioned. It was of the Apician type, and he was such a faithful disciple of the Roman gourmand that he declared he would be content to follow him out of the world rather than be forced to live in it on a plain diet. He loved good wine, and we can measure the depth of his love by what himself has told us: "Oh, that my mouth were

JAMES QUIN.

as large as the arch of Westminster Bridge, and the river ran Burgundy." Another outburst of his bacchanalian longings we find in his soliloquy over the embalmed body of Duke Humphrey, while it lay in the Cathedral of St. Albans:

"Oh plague on Egypt's Arts, I say!
Embalm the dead! On senseless clay
Rich wines and spices waste!
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle lie,
Which I can never taste?

"Let me embalm this flesh of mine
With turtle fat and Bordeaux wine
And spoil the Egyptian trade!
Than Humphrey's Duke more happy I—
Embalmed alive, old Quin shall die
A mummy ready made."

As is sometimes the case with epicures, Quin was an expert cook. He knew how to utilize the resources of the *cuisine,* and could turn out a new dish with all the ingenuity of a Savarin. His friends were aware of this. Among them were many slaves of the table, like himself, and when they heard of one of his kitchen novelties they never let him rest until they had wormed the recipe out of him. His home was at Bath, and he often delight-

ed the stomachs of his townsmen with one of his inventions, for which he was never at a loss for a name as novel as the dish. One of these he called "Soup a la Siam," the ingredients of which he pretended were sent to him from the East. His friends were wild in their praises of its excellence, and began, as usual, to besiege him with requests for the recipe. But Quin was deaf to all their entreaties. He refused to part with his secret, putting off his female friends with promises, while those of the other sex had to be content with a blunt denial.

The Bath *bon-vivants* then resolved upon another course to obtain their end. "If he won't give us the recipe we'll worry the life out of him, and give him no peace." With this intent a dozen or more of the male conspirators put their heads together, and day after day flooded the actor with anonymous letters, the burden of which was made up of praises for his "Siam," and reminders of the injury he was inflicting upon humanity by withholding from it the recipe.

Quin suspected the source of the letters,

and being convinced that the design of the writers was to badger him, determined to take his revenge. His manner of taking it was worthy of the wag. He wrote to each of the suspected ones, inviting them all to dine with him on a certain day, and telling them that he had invented another dish especially for the occasion, and which, he assured them, surpassed even the "Siam" in delicacy of flavor. He also promised to let them have the recipe for its preparation, if they desired it.

Of course, the invitation was gladly accepted. The day came, and when all were seated at the table the new dish was brought in, and Quin opened the ceremonies with a short speech:

"Gentlemen, before you begin, let me say that your reputation as gourmets is so well known to me that I would n't venture to set before you a dish unless it were of extraordinary excellence. I call my new invention 'Purée a la Calf,' and I am sure you will be so pleased with it that the 'Siam' will linger no longer in your recollection. As for me,

I am sorry to say, I am a little under the weather, and must confine myself for a day to simpler diet. Now, gentlemen, for your verdict."

The verdict was unanimous. They all vowed that never had they tasted a soup so deliciously seasoned, nor one that could compare with it in the delicacy of its flavor.

"You are right, Mr. Quin. You have indeed surpassed yourself with your new invention and made us forget the 'Siam.' And now for your promise."

And each guest pulled out his tablets and prepared to write down the recipe.

"My promise? What promise?" asked Quin.

"Why, that you would give us the recipe."

"I don't remember making any such promise."

His guests, however, were not to be put off so easily. They locked the door and told him plainly that they would n't leave the room, nor should he, until he had redeemed his promise by giving them the recipe.

With some stammering and a good deal of seeming reluctance, Quin finally yielded.

"Well, gentlemen, my memory may be at fault, and since you insist that I made the promise, I suppose I shall have to keep it. Here is the recipe, which I will read to you, but please don't interrupt me until I am through. In the first place, take a pair of old boots—the older the boots, the better will be the flavor of the soup—cut off their tops and soles and soak them over night in a pail of warm water. In the morning take them out and chop them up into fine particles, like mincemeat; then throw them into a copper kettle, adding the water in which they were soaked, also some sage, three or four minced onions, spices to suit the taste, a little salt, a small piece of ham and a glass of good sherry. Simmer the whole for three hours and serve hot."

There was no perceptible change in the countenance of Quin while reading his recipe, but he had barely finished the first line of it when the faces of his guests began to lengthen and lose their native hue; and

before he reached the end of it the ruby cheeks of the *bon-vivants* were hidden under "the pale cast of thought" that they had been poisoned.

"Is this one of your jokes, Mr. Quin, or do you really mean to say that you invited us here to dine on old boots?"

"To dine on old boots? Not entirely," replied Quin, "I invited you here to try my new soup and give me your opinion of it. You have done both—swallowing it liberally, and with praises so loud that I feel flattered, coming as they do from such accomplished gourmets. However, if the dish has proved too rich, even for your educated stomachs, don't be alarmed—there 's an apothecary's shop just around the corner."

They thought the hint apropos and took it. Without waiting for the remainder of the dinner, they seized their hats, hurried from the house and "around the corner," where, by the aid of "ipecac," or some other prophylactic persuasive, they were relieved of Quin's "Purée a la Calf."

It was needless for Quin to mention—

for the world would have surmised it—"I am no one-bottle man, and pity him who can't stow away a half-dozen without stowing himself away under the table." Yet even a wine-butt has its limit, and notwithstanding the capactiy of the old comedian, he was not without a goodly share of under-the-table experience.

As a matter of course, Quin was a "jolly good fellow" in the eye of his brother-actors, and therefore had a multitude of friends among them. But there was one he was proud to distinguish as his "bosom-friend"—Samuel Foote. It seems a little strange that two men who differed so widely in disposition and temperament should have been drawn so closely together by the ties of friendship. Quin was full of good nature and good words; Foote was irascible, with a tongue tipped with gall; Quin would forget the rankest offence, unless it amounted to an insult; Foote would coddle in his bosom the most trivial one; Quin's waggishness was of the "give-and-take" kind; Foote's was all give and no take; Quin

could enjoy a joke, made at his expense, quite as much as one of his own that somebody else had to pay for; Foote would gloat over the squirmings of him who had been hit by his waggery, but he objected to being a target for that of other people. His sensitiveness was so thin-skinned that to perpetrate a joke upon him was sure to bring his everlasting enmity on the head of the perpetrator.

Now, Quin was well aware of Foote's waspish touchiness, for he had known him too long to be ignorant of it. Yet he wouldn't permit a little matter of that kind, nor even the big matter of bosom-friendship, to stand in the way of his waggery. His appetite for a joke was something which had to be satisfied at whatever cost.

It chanced one day that he met three of Foote's friends, and, with a long face full of solemnity and pity, he began the conversation:

"Poor Foote! I feel sorry for him."

"Sorry for him? Why, what's the matter now?"

"His old complaint—financial trouble. You remember how quickly he ran through two fortunes and now, it seems, he has reached the end of his third. However, what I am about to tell you is in strict confidence and you must promise me to let it go no further. You know the poor fellow's sensitiveness, and how anxious he is to cover up the signs of poverty."

They gave the required promise, and Quin continued:

"I called on him last Sunday morning and finding him in bed asked him to get up and dress himself, so that we might take a stroll together. But with a heavy sigh he declined."

"Declined? Was he sick?"

"No; he said his shirt was in the custody of his washerwoman and he would have to lie abed until it was washed. Very sad, isn't it?"

The story may have been sad, but it was too good to be hidden, even under the cloak of "strict confidence." It wasn't long in reaching the ears of Foote, and so deep was

his chagrin and so roused his anger that he refused to speak to Quin for months afterwards. Time, however, did bring about a reconciliation, but still the recollection of the joke rankled in the breast of Foote and so sorely that, one day, he couldn't refrain from letting out his mortification:

"Tell me now, Jemmy; how could you ever have said such a ridiculous thing as that?"

"As what?" asked Quin.

"Why, that I had to lie abed while having my shirt washed."

"I didn't say it, my boy; how could I? I didn't know you had a shirt!"

Quin's tenderness of heart, had given him a distaste for angling and one of his sporting friends asking him the reason for his aversion, he replied: "Self-preservation. You anglers have no mercy and are so fond of variety you might take it into your head, some day, to go a-Quinning; if you did, and were shrewd enough to use a haunch of venison for your bait, I should be sure to bite at it:

Then tell me how would Jemmy's carcass look,
Jerked in the air and dangling on a hook?"

Quin was never great in Tragedy. His attempts in that field were mediocre and merely imitations of Barton Booth, the pupil and successor of Betterton. It was on his Falstaff that his reputation was built—a reputation which Foote has warmly assured us was deserved: "I can only recommend a man, who wants to see a character perfectly played, to see Mr. Quin in the part of Falstaff; and if he doesn't express a desire of spending an evening with that merry mortal, I wouldn't spend one with *him,* if he would pay my reckoning."

It was in this part that Quin made his last appearance on the stage. The occasion was a special one, being the benefit of his friend and fellow-actor, Ryan. The result was such a financial success, that the beneficiary wrote to Quin the following year saying that he intended to take another benefit and asking the actor if he wouldn't do him the favor to appear once more in the same part. But

Quin in the meantime had lost two of his front teeth—a loss which interfered so seriously with the flow of his speech that he refused to comply with his friend's request. His letter of reply to Ryan was characteristic:

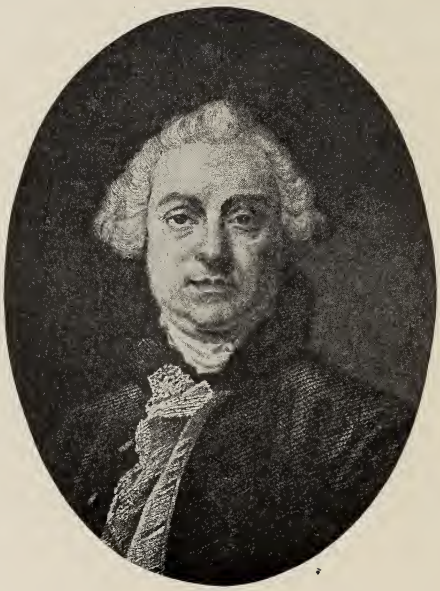
My Dear Friend:

There is no person on earth I would sooner serve than yourself; but, by G—d, sir! I will whistle Falstaff for no man!

JAMES QUIN.

From the time of his last appearance—March 19th, 1753—Quin lived in retirement at Bath until his death, which occurred on January 21st, 1766. He was buried in the Abbey Church where his tomb is topped by a marble monument on which is engraved the following epitaph written by Garrick:

"That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charmed the public ear is heard no more!
Closed are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spake before the tongue what Shakspere writ;
Cold is that hand, which, living, was stretched forth
At Friendship's call, to succour modest worth.
Here lies James Quin—Deign, reader, to be taught,
What e'er thy strength of body, force of thought;
In Nature's happiest mould, however cast,
To this complexion must thou come at last."



SAMUEL FOOTE.

Samuel Foote.

FOOTE'S name, like that of his friend Quin, holds a place—though an equivocal one—on the scroll of Fame. There is no doubt that he left something behind him for the tongue of Posterity to talk about, but it was not the record of a great actor. A great mimic he surely was, as well as a comic dramatist possessed of an infinite stock of satire and polished buffoonery. As a playwright, however, he had but little claim to excellence. His so-called comedies were nothing more than lamely-constructed farces, without plot, and filled with witty attacks upon soiled reputations, and caustic hits at the vices and weaknesses of those whom he picked out for his gibbeting. In the flings of his satire he was no respecter of persons, nor of things sacred or profane. This, very naturally, made him many enemies, but it tickled the public taste and put

money in his purse—something which his extravagance always had use for, and something that it knew how to get rid of in, a way to leave him periodically on his beam-ends.

He made his first appearance on the Stage in 1744, but the public saw nothing in him then to catch their fancy; nor was it until three years after his debut that he succeeded in opening their eyes. He had tried each end of the Drama—Tragedy and Comedy—and failed in both. Then he began to wonder whether Nature ever intended him for an actor: "If she did, and I am fit for neither Tragedy nor Comedy, what the d—l am I fit for?" His question was soon to be answered. He was cast for the part of *Bayes* in "The Rehearsal" and his success in it left no doubt in his mind what he was "fit for." Garrick had previously played the same part, introducing imitations of various actors, and Foote was quick to profit by his example.

But the comedian was much the greater mimic of the two. Besides, he interspersed his imitations with satirical "gags," the sub-

jects of which the audience were quick to recognize. Nor did he confine his mimicry in the part to the peculiarities of actors. He brought in the followers of all professions alike, or such of them whose deeds or misdeeds offered a mark for his ridicule.

His phenomenal success as a mimic led him now to abandon all thought of again attempting the legitimate drama, and to devote his talent to such parts in his own farces as were fitted for it. In these he was uniformly successful; although his scurrilous tongue and pen occasionally tangled him in the meshes of the law.

He once undertook to lampoon George Faulkner, the publisher of the Dublin *Journal*. George had lost one of his legs and was forced thereafter to hobble through the world on an artificial one. Foote thought that no man with "one leg in the grave," and "a wooden understanding," should be so full of conceit and eccentricity, and therefore to give a "form and pressure" to his thought he brought the printer into one of his farces, "The Orators," giving him the

name of Peter Paragraph, and caricaturing him so heartlessly that George turned on the wag and brought an action for libel. The result was not entirely satisfactory to the plaintiff. He discovered, as others have done since his time, that "a poor man's right in the law hangs like a fish in the net." Foote suffered but little damage from the suit, either in pocket or fame. Two months afterward he again produced "The Orators" at the Haymarket, introducing a new scene in which he caricatured the Judge, the jury, the counsel and the whole of the Court's proceedings.

It was during the progress of Foote's trial that Faulkner's counsel—with a brain evidently "fuddled by the fumes of fancy"—likened his client to Socrates and dubbed the mimic "The British Aristophanes." The comparison was hardly a happy one. Faulkner was the plaintiff in his case, while Socrates, in his legal trouble, was the defendant. And even if it were true that "The Clouds" of Aristophanes furnished a Court of Justice with the hint, and substantially

the grounds, upon which the bare-foot philospoher was prosecuted and deprived of his life, yet all this doesn't prove that Foote deserved the compliment which the flowery advocate had thrust upon him. On what then, did the hyperbolist base the fitness of his epithet? Did he think that the defendant was a caricaturist of the Aristophanes pattern and therefore entitled to it? If this were his opinion he has given us an apt illustration of the truth of Pope's line: "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Of course it is quite plain that both poets were caricaturists, but it needs no Socratic subtlety in a lawyer, nor in anyone else, to demonstrate that they never learned their trade in the same "thinking-shop." Foote at once disclaimed the epithet, saying he would not point out the mistake of the learned counsel but would leave it to his enemies to discover the absurdity of the comparison.

Foote was no sycophant. He had but little respect for Nobility, and no regard for the reputation of its lords and ladies when they had none for it themselves. The Duke

of Norfolk, one of the wag's acquaintances, was notoriously fond of the bottle and usually carried enough of it under his gold-laced waistcoat to make his dukeship top-heavy. One day he said to Foote: "I am invited to a masquerade to-morrow night; can you suggest some character for me to appear in that would be novel?" "Certainly," replied the wag—"Go sober!"

The reply was witty, and there was nothing in it at which good-taste could take offence; but his waggery often did offend it, and in the most boorish manner. He would accept of a lord's hospitality and then, if the dinner didn't exactly please him, he would abuse both his host and his entertainment.

On one occasion he dined with Lord Townshend, who had been engaged, the day before, in a duel. When the dinner was finished, Foote remarked:

"Your lordship might have settled with your antagonist in a more deadly way."

"A more deadly way, Mr. Foote? How?"

"By inviting him to such a dinner as this and poisoning him."

Here is another sample of his insolent humor. He had accepted an invitation to dine with a certain nobleman, but again the quality of the dinner didn't reach his expectations. On leaving the house, he found the servants ranged in line on each side of the hall waiting for their customary tip. "Where's the cook and butler?" he asked. When they stepped forward he said to the cook: "There's a half-crown for my eating;" then, turning to the butler: "There are five shillings for my wine; but, by G—d, never in my life have I had so poor a dinner for the money."

In his crabbed moods the Stage and its people would become the objects of his reproach and sarcasm. He believed, or feigned to believe, that no mental qualifications were required in the make-up of an actor, and that the profession itself was "the last resource of ignorance, indolence and vice." During his term of theatrical management he once dismissed his prompter from the position, but still employed him at the same salary, sending him on to play trifling parts.

One of the company, on noticing the change, said: "So, Mr. Foote, we have lost our old prompter." "Yes," replied Foote, "the fellow didn't know enough for the position; he couldn't read, so I made an actor of him."

The wag was not devoted to the payment of his debts. He argued that it was a bad habit to get into and the cause of much of the world's uneasiness; "therefore," he says, "it would be good for every man to learn the art of not paying his debts; it is the art of living without money. It saves the trouble of keeping accounts, and makes other people work for our repose. It checks avarice and encourages generosity—as people are commonly more liberal with the property of others than with their own. In short, it draws the inquiries and attentions of the world on us while we live, and makes us sincerely regretted when we die."

Among the many titled acquaintances of the comedian was one Lord Kellie. His lordship was a noted wine-bibber and his countenance was so lighted up by the illuminating properties of Port and Burgundy,

that in warmth and brightness it seemed to rival the midday sun. Foote asked him to dine with him and his lordship promised to do so, but on the day appointed he met the actor in a coffee-house and told him he would have to break his promise as he had accepted an invitation, since he gave it, which would compel him to dine elsewhere. Foote was displeased, and, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all the occupants of the room, said: "Is that so, my lord? Well, since you cannot do me the honor of dining with me today, you can oblige me in another way. As you ride by my house be kind enough to look over the fence and against my side wall. We have had so little sun for the past fortnight that my peaches are pining and will be grateful for a glimpse of your lordship's countenance."

This same lord was fond of playing practical jokes upon his friends and in a manner so coarse that a certain Irish gentleman remarked to Foote: "If his lordship should undertake to play one of his scurvy pranks on me I would pull his nose." "Pull his

nose?" echoed the wag, "safer to hire a salamander to do that—unless you want your fingers burned."

Whenever Foote had one of his impecunious attacks he used all manner of diplomacy to keep the knowledge of it from his friends. He thought that some show of prosperity was needed for this, and therefore in turning over his collateral to his "Uncle" he would let everything go except his watch. If he was minus a shirt, what mattered it? He could button up his coat, pull out his gold repeater, and who then would suspect that he didn't know where his next meal was to come from? While struggling through one of these pinched periods of his erratic life he chanced to meet Macklin, who had often been the victim of his jokes, but was now to have an opportunity to retaliate. They entered a coffee-house and, as soon as seated at one of the tables, Foote pulled out his gold repeater, looked at it, dangled it in his hand, and then held it up to his ear. Suddenly he exclaimed: "Zounds, Mack! my watch has stopped!"

"Never mind, Sam," said Macklin. "Have a little patience—it will soon go!"

A country gentleman, with whom Foote was stopping on a visit, had just buried a relative (an attorney) and was complaining of the expenses attending a country funeral.

"Why, sir," he said, "after the carriages, the hat-bands, the scarfs, and the other *et ceteras* are paid for, there is nothing left.

"Is it possible you bury your attorneys here?"

"Bury them? Of course we do. How else could we dispose of them?"

"Do as we do in London. We never bury them there."

"You don't? How in the world do you get rid of them?"

"Easily enough. When a lawyer dies we lay him out at night in a room by himself, throw open the sash, lock the door, and in the morning he is gone."

"Gone? Gone where?"

"That we cannot tell. All we know is that he is gone and there's a strong smell of brimstone in the room."

Foote once rented a house which had been advertised as "completely furnished." The day after he took possession his cook came to him with the complaint that there was no rolling-pin in the kitchen. "No rolling-pin?" said Foote, "then bring me a saw and I'll make you one;" which he did by sawing off the top of a mahogany bed-post. The next day there was another complaint—"no coal-scuttle in the house," and to supply one a drawer was taken from a curious Japanese chest. Then it was discovered there was no carpet on the parlor floor. "That will never do," said Foote, "the boards will be ruined." So to "save the boards" he covered them over with a couple of new white counterpanes. When the landlord came to see how his tenant liked his residence, he was astonished at the disordered state of the rooms and threatened to sue the wag for the injury done to his furniture. But Foote replied: "The injury, sir, is all on my side, for I have been compelled to supply things which no 'completely-furnished' house should be without. You may sue, if you please, but if you do

I'll lampoon you on the stage and we will see who gets the best of it." This threat so calmed the ire of the landlord that Foote was never troubled with a "suit for damages."

Skillful as Foote was in "the keen encounters of his wit" he was sometimes nonplused by having his own weapon turned upon himself. He once had a law-suit over a three-year lease of the Edinburgh Theatre, and the decision being against him the Scottish agent came from Edinburgh with a bill of costs which the actor had to pay, remarking as he did so: "Well, now you have your money, I presume you intend to return to Edinburgh and, like all your tight-fisted countrymen, you'll get there in the cheapest way possible." The Scotchman put the cash in his pocket and, tapping upon the latter in a significant way, replied: "Aye, aye, mon; I shall travel on Foote."

After his hit in "The Rehearsal" Foote opened the New Haymarket Theatre with his "tea-drinking entertainments." These soon became the rage of the season and the

tide of the wag's ill luck was again on the ebb. Quin, of course, was not unaware of his success and in speaking of it said: "I am glad of it. We may now look to see the poor devil with a clean shirt on." Such a remark was not likely to go to sleep, especially as it was made to a friend of Foote's. The gentleman went at once to the Bedford where he found the wag and told him of it. A moment later Quin himself entered the coffee-house. "So, Jemmy," said Foote, "you have been amusing my friend here with another of your jokes. He tells me that you said I should now be able to wear clean shirts. How dare you take such a liberty as that?"

"Your friend has made a mistake," replied Quin; "I didn't say *shirts;* I said *shirt.* Do you suppose I could be so ignorant as to use the plural number?"

Lord Townshend was at one time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Foote attended one of his levees. Among his Excellency's suite the wag was somewhat surprised to see a person whom he had known to have been

one of the Jeremy Diddlers of London. To satisfy himself that he was not mistaken in his surmise he asked Lord Townshend the name of the man. "That," said his lordship, "is Mr. S——, one of my gentlemen at large. Don't you know him?" "Oh yes, I know him," replied Foote; "but what your Excellency tells me is doubly extraordinary; first, that he is a gentleman; and, next, that he should be *at large.*"

The actor once dined with a party of merchant-tailors. The dinner passed off pleasantly, and he sat at the table until the knights of the shears began to thin out and more than half of them had left. Then he rose and took his leave saying, with an air of seriousness: "Gentlemen, I wish you both good-night." "Both?" echoed one of the company; "Why, Foote, that last bottle must have twisted your vision. There are a dozen or more of us left yet." "Oh, yes," said the wag, "I know that, for I took the trouble to count you. Eighteen is the number, and, as it takes nine tailors to make a man, I wish you both good-night."

Foote died in Dover on the 21st of October, 1777, and, on the 27th of that month was buried by torchlight in the cloisters of Westminster, where he now lies, with no memorial to mark his resting place—no epitaph to jog the world's remembrance of his virtues. Whatever may have been his faults, or vices, as his enemies were pleased to call them, he was not the consummate rascal that they thought him. He must have been possessed of some virtues, or he never could have won the esteem and admiration of Dr. Johnson: "He was a fine fellow in his way, and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories;" so thought the doctor, and his wise old head knew the literary wealth of the world too well to believe that it could be "really impoverished" by the "sinking glories" of a scamp. At all events, the name of Foote still lives. A century-and-a-half has elapsed since his "glories" were in full bloom, and, while the world hesitates to count him among the great players and playwrights of the past, it will ever remember him as the chief of its departed wags.

WILLIAM WHEATLEY.

From the collection of Charles N. Mann.

William Wheatley.

And an Episode of Nicaraguan Life.

WHILE he lived, the Stage knew but few better actors than William Wheatley, and since his time it has known but few so good. In "juvenile" parts he was always acceptable, but "light comedy" was the field better fitted for the show of his ability. In such characters as "Rover," "Young Rapid," "Bob Handy" in *Speed the Plough,* "Mirabel" in the *Inconstant,* and the "Copper Captain" in *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,* he had no peer—with the possible exception of James E. Murdoch. The latter, however, lacked the handsome face and graceful form of Wheatley—potent if not essential aids to the light comedian.

I became acquainted with Wheatley in 1849. He was then a member of the Walnut Street Theatre Company of Philadelphia, under the management of E. A. Marshall.

Actors of that time were not paid so liberally for their services as are those of to-day, and Wheatley had to be content with his twenty-five dollars per week. This seems a paltry sum when we consider that there are players now of no more merit who demand their three-hundred a week, and get it.

Before he became a Philadelphian he was a member of the Old Park Theatre Company of New York. It was on the boards of this theatre that Dion Boucicault's comedy of "London Assurance" was first produced in America and with a remarkable cast. Harry Placide was the Sir Harcourt, Peter Richings the Dazzle, Charlotte Cushman the Lady Gay Spanker, and William Wheatley the Charles Courtley. (Boucicault has the credit of being the author of "London Assurance"; but Brougham was his collaborateur, and there is every reason to believe that John's brain was responsible for the greater part of the comedy's humor and brilliancy.)

Nowadays—when every actor or actress of any note gathers a company of his or her own, pitches upon a play and stars

the country with it—'t would be a difficult task for the manager of any theatre to collect an array of talent equal to that of the Old Park. But, admitting the possibility of gathering such a company together, and that the manager's exchequer were broad enough to straddle the expense, there would still be another block in the road of his success—I mean, if he confined his company to the old-time comedies. The taste of the public has changed and old-time wit no longer pleases the palate of the playgoer. He must have something with a stronger spice in it; something dished up in the style of the "Brass Monkey" or the "Texas Steer;" and he'll have it, or turn his back on the theatre that won't oblige him and seek another that will. However, this is a subject "to be handled with care." There are plenty of preachers on the "Decadence of the Drama," but their text is not well taken. The Decadence of the Public Taste "would be more german to the matter."

Speaking of the Old Park, here is an interesting bit of something that happened to

Wheatley while he was a member of its company. By dint of economy through years of his stage labor he had saved a couple of thousand dollars and was looking about him for some profitable way in which to invest it. Among his friends was one who professed to have the knack of handling the ups-and-downs of the stock market without getting his fingers squeezed. "Wheatley," he said, "if you have any money to invest I can give you a Wall Street tip by which you can quadruple your capital in a week." This was what my friend was looking for, but he was a little shy of the method. He had often heard that a Wall Street operation was very like the operation of a mouse trap—easy to enter but hard to get out of alive.

Still he had confidence in his friend and asked him the nature of the "tip." "Buy Harlem," was the reply, "the stock is selling to-day at $64 and will surely reach par, and may go beyond, before the week is out."

The temptation was too strong for Wheatley to resist. He turned his money over to his friend, who invested it in 200 shares of

Harlem at 64, buying the stock on a margin. But alas the stability of all human calculations, especially if they be built upon a Wall Street foundation. The next morning Harlem rose a point, then dropped two, and continued in its downward track, and with such toboggan speed that in forty-eight hours the stock had lost fifteen points, leaving Wheatley minus his $2000, and in debt for half as much more.

Now, two thousand dollars may not be a very big fortune to lose, but when it happens to be all that a man has, the loser needs the aid of some philosophy to reconcile him to his loss. And Wheatley had a good deal of the needed article. "I don't have to go far from home," he said, "to discover the truth of the old proverb about the 'fool and his money'; nor do I intend to cry over my 'spilt milk.'" Nor did he. Never afterwards did I hear him allude to the matter but once; it was during the rehearsal of a play in which he had to "tag the piece"—that is, to speak the closing line, which read:

"I ne'er will act from reckless impulse more."

He spoke the line and then, with a muffled sigh, added one of his own:

"Nor purchase Harlem stock at sixty-four!"

In speaking further of Wheatley I shall bring in a year of his life in the wilds of Nicaragua, following up his career from the time he left the stage—a comparatively poor man—until he returned to it to pick up a plethoric fortune. This may not prove uninteresting reading; at all events it will give me the opportunity of unearthing some of his waggery.

Our acquaintance began, as I have said, in '49, and soon ripened into mutual friendship. It was about this time that the actor became disgusted with his profession. He had labored in it long and hard, and rather than waste more of his years and energy upon labor so unremunerative, he resolved to leave it. This resolution he followed up with a farewell benefit, and at the close of the performance he came before the curtain, thanked the Philadelphians for their generous attendance and bade the stage farewell forever.

Was it to be forever? He thought so then, but, "there's a divinity that shapes our ends" and sometimes shapes them without waiting for our dictation or consent.

After the benefit he went to New York and accepted a position in the office of his brother-in-law, E. H. Miller, a prominent Wall Street broker. One year of such a life was quite enough for Wheatley. He was entirely out of his element, and more discontented than a fish out of water.

Miller saw his discontent and said to him: "William, it is very plain that you miss the flare of the footlights and have no relish for the society of bulls and bears. All this is natural enough, but I have something now to propose which may be more to your liking."

"Well, go on, Ned; I am more than ready to listen."

"You know, I presume, that I am a heavy stockholder in the Nicaragua Transit Company?"

"I do—what then?"

"You also know that the Pacific end of the

Transit route connects with Commodore Vanderbilt's steamers that run to San Francisco?"

"Yes."

"Well, my proposition is this: You have some little money—enough, I think, for the purpose, if you haven't I will help you out—take this, go down to Central America, buy or rent a ranch and raise cattle for the purpose of supplying the Vanderbilt steamers with beef. What do you think of it?"

There was novelty in the propositon and, spiced as it was with the promise of adventure, it tickled the *ennuied* spirits of Wheatley, and was destined to change the current, not only of the comedian's life, but of my own.

I was then living a bachelor in Philadelphia, with rooms on Chestnut Street, opposite the old State House. On entering my room, one day, I found the lid of a bandbox pushed under the door and, scribbled upon it, I read:

"My Dear Joe:

I have come from New York for the sole

purpose of seeing you, and on a matter of great moment to both of us. Meet me at the Chestnut Street Theatre to-night. Don't fail. You will find me in the lower private box. WILLIAM WHEATLEY."

I met him in the box, and he began at once to reveal the "matter of great moment." He told me the burden of his interview with Miller, and that he had determined to act upon the latter's proposition. "And now," he said, "you are the only man I care to have as a partner, and if you can raise a couple of thousand dollars, your fortune is made."

"Well," I replied, "I don't object to a fortune; it is a convenient thing to have. But how about the febrile possibilities of a Nicaraguan climate? Tropical fevers are apt to be dangerously rough on the constitution of a Northern man, and I would rather miss a fortune than tumble into my grave in running to clutch it."

"Tumble into your grave? Nonsense, my boy. Have you ever read Squier's 'Notes on Central America'? If you have n't I can assure you that Nicaragua is the garden-spot

—the Paradise of the world; which it would n't be if its denizens were in the habit of tumbling into their graves."

He then went into a long and fervid description of the country—its perpetual summer, its balmy skies, the soft breath of its atmosphere, the luxuriant foliage, the never-ending stretch of its orange groves, and various other adjuncts that aid in making up the bliss of a Paradise.

I listened to all of it, and on leaving him said: "Well, William, I will think over the matter and then write you my decision."

"Very good, my boy, but be speedy as possible, and in the making of your decision don't forget the pregnant words of Brutus:

> 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.'"

I thought the matter over, and the result of my thinking was what might have been expected. I was young, with no matrimonial nor other ties to shackle me, and had a sharp appetite for adventure (of which, by the way, I was soon to be gratified with a stomachful.)

The next day I sold enough ground-rents to realize the required $2000, and then wrote Wheatley that I would join him in his undertaking, and that he might expect me in New York the following day. On my arrival he greeted me cordially, and after congratulating me on the wisdom of my decision, said: "I have secured berths for us both on the Daniel Webster, and to-day week we will be on our way to carve our fortunes in the 'land of orange blossoms.' "

It was a balmy day in the month of October when we stood on the deck of the Webster as she backed lazily out of her dock to plow her way down the bay and out through the Narrows into the broad sea, with her black nose pointed toward the Paradise of the World.

The Webster was a side-wheeler, and I stood a little abaft one of her wheelhouses, leaning over the rail. The sea was rolling rather heavily, and as the ship rolled with it I watched with some interest the motion of the wheel. When the steamer would take a larboard list the wheel would be plunged

out of sight. When the list was the other way it would bring the wheel again into view, with its paddles whirling around entirely clear of the water.

I had left Wheatley a few steps away, and now turned to draw his attention to what had so interested me. He was nowhere to be seen, and again I leaned over the rail. Being in the very prime of my "salad days," as a matter of course, my bosom was full of poetry and sentiment, and nothing is more apt to stir them up and bring them out than the boundless sea. I learned all this as I cast my eye over its broad expanse to where the waters met and kissed the embracing sky; but I was shortly to learn a little more.

My mind was wrapped "in reverie profound."

O, what ecstatic joys await the man
Who lives his life upon the ocean's span;
Grant me but this, O Fortune! then no more
Of thee I'll ask, nor waste my life on—

My reverie was suddenly choked and my poetry cut short by a strange down-side-up

THE AUTHOR, IN HIS SALAD DAYS.

sensation. My boots seemed to have a desire to crawl up over my head, and it was painfully evident that the sea, which had so stirred up and brought out my poetry and sentiment, was now stirring up and about to bring out everything else that was in me. My young breast had suddenly lost its love for the briny deep. More liberal than Shakspere's Gonzalo, who offered "a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground," I would have bartered the whole of Neptune's kingdom for a bare tubful of well-balanced earth.

I had heard a little and read a great deal about *mal-de-mer,* and the quantity of misery it holds to fill the cup of mortals; yet I confidently believed it would never pour any of it into mine. If I am not mistaken, it is characteristic of him who dallies with the bosom of the ocean for the first time to have the same belief and confidence in the steadiness of his stomach. He is a lucky man if his confidence be not abused.

But to return to my own case. I started for my stateroom and got as far as the gang-

way that led into the saloon below. Stretched between the doors of the gangway was a cane sofa, and on one end of it I saw a man seated, with his head leaning upon his hand, and apparently asleep. It was my friend Wheatley. A deep groan told me that he was not asleep, although his eyes were shut.

"Is that you, Joe? I wish you would be kind enough to take my arm and help me down these steps and into my berth. It is the last favor I shall ever ask of you. I am going there to die!"

Now, it is no easy undertaking for a sea-sick man to be facetious, yet I could n't help trying it.

"To die? Not yet, not yet, my boy. No man can do that till his time comes, and yours has n't arrived. I know you are on your road to Paradise, but I don't think you 'll have to die to get there."

He made no reply—save another groan; then, rising slowly on his feet, he linked his arm in mine, and we tottered down the gangway steps and across the saloon cabin to the door of our stateroom.

Wheatley crawled into his berth with his clothes on, but I removed mine—a bit of work which the lurching of the vessel rendered somewhat toilsome; nor would I have done it could I have foreseen the trouble I was to have in getting into them again. However, that was a task I had n't the courage to tackle for three days—days of superb misery, during which time my stomach's needs were as modest as those of Goldsmith's Hermit; it wanted "but little here below." The corner of a soda biscuit would answer for a meal; indeed, this was about all it would hospitably entertain, and sometimes 't would be uncivil even to that, and kick it out as an intruder.

My friend's attack was not so lasting. The morning after it he was out of the stateroom, and, what seemed marvelous to me, with a stomach steady enough to allow its owner to eat his breakfast at the ship's table.

By the morning of the fourth day my own stomach had ceased its topsy-turvy tricks—possibly for want of capital to work on—and I was able to get out of my berth. I

thought a sniff of the salt air might exhilarate me, and I was anxious to be on deck where I could have it. But that was out of the question, unless I could get into my trousers. I was still dizzy-headed, and the floor of the stateroom, tilted three-fourths of the time at an angle of forty-five degrees, was not a promising platform for a dizzy head. However, by dint of patience and the propping of my body against the side of the berth, I did get into them, and resolved never again to get out of them until once more underpinned by old Mother Earth. The other parts of my toilet were comparatively easy.

The remaining days of our trip were not without the usual monotony of sea voyages, until we were approaching the Nicaraguan coast. Stretching along the latter and overhanging it like a pall, we saw a dense and sharply defined cloud, and in a short half hour we had left the bright sunshine behind us, and were steaming our way under the downpour of a tropical rain and into the harbor of San Juan del Norte. This, how-

ever, is no longer the accepted name of the town. When John Bull took protectorate possession of the Mosquito coast he changed the Spanish name, and although the Clayton-Bulwer treaty ended his protectorate in 1850, it has n't as yet squelched his chosen one of Greytown.

There is nothing very picturesque, or in any other way attractive, about the town; at least, there was n't fifty years ago, and I believe the lapse of the half century has made but little change or improvement. It then consisted of perhaps forty or fifty houses, a few of which were frame and the remainder built of cane and thatched with either palm leaves or grass, and sometimes with "sacchate," the native name for corn-stalks. The town contained about three hundred souls, of various colors—black, brown, red, yellow and white. The site itself is low and flat, and admirably fitted for the raising of mosquitoes and the breeding of Calentura—a pretty name for the ugliest fever that ever boiled the blood and crazed the brain of man.

On our trip we had made the friendship of Captain Baldwin of the Webster, who now gave us this pithy advice: "Gentlemen, it may be three or four days, perhaps a week, before the river steamer will be down to take you on your way. In the meantime you may, if you choose, remain with me aboard ship. If you take up your quarters in Greytown one night's sleep in that place might saddle you with a fever, which, perhaps, would take you a month to get rid of—if you got rid of it at all."

We thanked him for his advice, and also for his invitation, which we accepted, clinging closely to the ship, and contenting ourselves with the distant view of a town that bore such an unwholesome reputation. We thought it was one of those cases where "distance lends enchantment to the view," and that Campbell might have had such a spot in his mind's eye when he penned that much-bequoted line.

Curiosity, however, is a pugnacious imp. It has battled with discretion ever since the world began, and it got so much the better

of mine that I ventured ashore to take an inside view of the place. I saw the main street thickly sprinkled with the Webster's passengers, and among them were a few of the residents. Two tell-tale tokens enabled me to distinguish them—the faces of the Greytowners were saffron-colored, and their clothes did n't fit them. The latter token, however, puzzled me. Was it possible that the town had no "Knight of the Goose," or none that knew his business? Maybe so; anyhow, I would soon find out.

On the side of a miserably muddy street, and facing the harbor, stood a one-story shanty, with a big sign on its front, reading: "St. Charles Hotel." Crossing over, I entered a narrow door and found myself in the bar-room. Behind the bar stood a man whom I judged to be the host himself. He had fishy eyes, and an unhealthy-looking complexion, from which all flesh-color had vanished and given place to a strong tint of gamboge. He was a Northern man, and his idiomatic expressions led me to believe that he had been born and brought up among the

wooden nutmegs. Yet my belief was enveloped in doubt. How was it possible, I thought, for a shrewd-brained Yankee to leave a comfortable home, if he had one, and risk his health and life in a place like Greytown? While I was trying to solve the question he snapped my thread of thought with another: "What 'll you have, stranger?"

"A glass of soda, if you please."

He emptied a bottle of the "soft stuff" into a glass and I threw down a silver dollar in payment. After picking up the coin and ringing it three or four times on the bar, he tossed it into his till, and handed me in change three Canadian twenty-cent pieces. It seemed to me that forty cents for a glass of soda was a rather stiff price, but I was yet to know that swindling was one of the customs of the country, and also to know that I must learn to do a little of it myself, or give up all hope of a fortune in the land of orange blossoms. However, swindling is an art not taught at a mother's knee, and I still had a glimmering recollection of the sacred school.

And now remembering the purpose for which I entered his place, I asked:

"Have you any tailors in Greytown?"

"Only one," he replied.

"Only one? Well, what 's the matter with him?"

"What 's the matter with him? Nuthin. Why d'ye ask me a queer question like that?"

"Because he don't know his business. The clothes of the Greytowners don't fit them."

He was wiping the top of the bar with a very dirty cloth, but stopped his work and, giving me a quizzical look out of the corner of his mackerel eye, replied:

"I reckon you 're a stranger in these parts?"

"Yes."

"One of the Webster's passengers?"

"Yes."

"So I reckoned. Well, stranger, if you stop long in these diggins I reckon your clothes won't fit you, nuther."

"I think I understand you. You mean that the Calentura will alter their shape?"

"No, I don't mean nuthin o' the sort, stranger; I mean that it 'll alter yourn, if you give it a chance. The Calentury is powerful cute, and when it gits among a crowd, it 'll pick out a stranger quicker 'n lightnin', and shake the meat off his bones as clean as a whis'l. And it won't take it long, nuther."

"But a man can become acclimatized, can he not?"

"Climatized? Yes, I reckon he kin—if he lives long enough. But strangers don't have time to do that down here. When the Calentury gets a good hold on 'em they pass in their chips before they have a chance to do any climatizing."

I thanked him for his cheerful information, and, being in no hurry to "pass in my chips," hastened aboard the Webster as if the Calentura were already at my heels and reaching to "shake the meat off my bones."

Captain Baldwin was right in surmising that we would be delayed in our wait for the river steamer. On the morning of our fifth day in the harbor we heard her high-pressure snort, and in a few minutes she crept out of

one of the mouths of the San Juan, and puffed slowly up to the side of the Webster.

We were not altogether pleased with her looks. Our journey up the river was sure to last some days, and as we were told that it rains on that stream twenty-three hours out of every twenty-four, we had a right to expect that the Transit Company would provide a steamer that would promise to keep its passengers reasonably dry. The boat we were looking at promised nothing of the sort. She was a flat-bottomed craft with a paddle-wheel behind, and no possible place for the accommodation of passengers, except an upper deck, swung with a multitude of wet hammocks, and covered with an awning. The latter was old and drilled with holes by mildew—holes as big as marbles, through which the rain was now running in streams upon the hammocks beneath.

I noticed Wheatley's face lengthen, as he remarked: "Well, the Transit Company must have a cheek of adamant if it expects a man to risk his precious health in a damp tub like that." (I am not so sure that

"damp" was the adjective he used. It had the sound, but it may have been one more emphatic.)

The passengers, who had been waiting in Greytown for the boat's arrival, were now being conveyed from the shore in scows, and the deck of the little steamer was soon crowded. Captain Baldwin advised us to wait for the other boat, which was soon to follow, and we did so, with the hope that it might promise us more comfort. But vain the hope. The boats were as like as two peas, with no visible difference, save that the awning over the second one had a more unwholesome look. (Perhaps "more holesome" would have better explained why the hammocks were wetter.)

Still there was one consolation left us—with the exception of the crew, we would have nearly the sole possession of the boat.

We got aboard with our luggage, bade Baldwin a friendly good-bye, and then, with a wheezy snort, the little steamer backed off from the side of the Webster and, turning about, paddled her way around Al-

ligator Point and pushed her slow snout into one of the mouths of the San Juan. I judged her normal speed to be about that of an old-time canal boat—say, five miles an hour—but, as she would have to struggle against the current of the river, the average speed of which is within a mile as much, it took but little figuring to tell us that our river trip of one hundred and nineteen miles would consume an equal number of hours—supposing there would be no detention on the way to add to the number. This supposition, however, proved to be a little too airy.

Our experience on the San Juan, and that of a year's residence in Nicaragua, will give the reader a fair idea of the many delights and not-a-few miseries a Northern man may expect if he has a fad for navigating tropical rivers, or a fancy for an equatorial home. To me the delights were questionable, and in the scales of my comfort were far outweighed by the miseries. Even the enthusiasm of my friend Wheatley underwent a magical change, and long before the year had expired he had ceased to talk

about orange groves. His eye had become so tired of their beauty, and his palate so surfeited with their fruit that, at dinner one day, he told me he was willing to barter all the gastronomic delicacies, as well as the other pleasures of his Paradise, for a single slice of a Jersey watermelon, or a sniff at a peck of her peaches.

But I am getting ahead of my story, and will go back a little to give the reader a short description of the San Juan, mingling it with a few incidents that overtook us before we reached our destination, which was still one hundred and sixty-five miles away.

The San Juan with its windings is one hundred and nineteen miles long, and its fall from Lake Nicaragua about one hundred and ten feet. Each side of the river, for a distance of twenty miles up from Greytown, is lined with foliage that reaches up from the water's edge to form a wall of green, impenetrable to the eye, and apparently to anything else. Between these the river runs, twisting its course in every direction of the compass, and boxing the thirty-two points

with the rapidity of an old salt. Day and night the clouds hang over it, pouring out their contents with little, if any, intermission.

Our first night on the river I shall never forget. The mosquitoes, possibly fearing that I might, bored the recollection into me, and raised a lump as big as a hen's egg at every bore. The San Juan mosquito is *sui generis*. He is three times the size of our Jersey breed, three times as multitudinous, and more than three times as hungry. He is full of diplomacy and caution, as well as agility. He never sings to let you know he 's coming, and if he be interrupted in his meal by one of your smacks he will dodge it with the skill of a prize-fighter, and then get in his work on a fresh spot. As a dodger he is probably the most accomplished of all the *Culex* tribe. It is n't strange, then, that, with his aid and that of the rain and the hole-drilled awning, I should recollect my first night on the San Juan. 'T would be strange, indeed, should I forget it.

The day broke with the rain still falling

in torrents. I asked Wheatley, who was sitting up in his hammock with an umbrella over his head: "Does Squiers in describing your Paradise tell you that the sun never shines upon it?"

"Have a little patience, my boy; the sun will shine bright enough before we reach our destination."

"And hot enough, I suppose—Hello! there 's one of the Saurian residents of our Eden!" and I pointed to an eight-foot alligator that waddled quickly down the river's bank and then plunged into the water.

"Yes, I saw him. Do you know, Joe, that these creatures have more sense and prudence than some of the human species?"

"No, I don't know it. When did you find that out?"

"Only a moment ago. Did n't you notice what haste that big fellow made to reach the river and get in out of the wet? There are some two-legged creatures that don't know enough to do that."

"So I have heard. Would you now suggest that we follow his example?"

"I would gladly jump overboard, my boy, if I were sure the mosquitoes would n't jump after me. Confound the pests! I never slept a wink all night, while you were snoozing and snoring away in your soaked hammock as happily as if you were in your comfortable bed at home."

My friend was mistaken. If I did drop into an occasional doze, 't was only to dream of my "comfortable bed at home," and then to wake and wonder how I ever could have been the jackass to leave it.

The little steamer was now puffing her slow and tortuous way up the river. On each side of her the dense foliage stretched its interminable length, alive with chattering monkeys and screeching parrots, and draped with trailing vines that hung festooned, drabbling their ends in the rush of the current below. To the Northern man such a scene is full of novelty, and, if the rain could be forgotten, abundance of beauty. But the novelty soon wears off; and the beauty—well, there may be too much of every good as well as beautiful thing. No man wants

his eye forever filled with the green of foliage, nor his ear with the screech of parrots and the chatter of monkeys. Eye and ear alike soon grow weary of monotony, and nowhere on earth can they find more of it than on the San Juan River.

After passing through the Machuca Rapids, and two more days of rain and as many nights of mosquito misery, we reached a landing a little way below the Castillo Rapids. These are thirty-seven miles from the lake, and rush over the ledges of rock with a fall of eight feet in about thirty. They are much too formidable for a steamer to climb; therefore the passengers with their baggage were transferred around them to another steamer, the "Director," which lay waiting for them at a landing above, and on which they were to be carried up the river to the lake.

We were detained at the Castillo for some hours and, if the weather had permitted, would have visited the "Castillo Viejo"—an ancient fort or castle from which the Rapids take their name. The gray walls of

the fort frown dismally down from their perch on a hill, the sides of which reach nearly to the river's edge, and are covered with a rank growth of verdure, matted and tangled together with tropical vines.

It was during our detention at the Castillo that we encountered another interesting resident of the world's Paradise, and one that is worthy of mention—the "jigger." The natives have another name, or rather two names, for it, the "Nigua" and the "Chigo." As I have said, it first made our acquaintance at the Rapids, and without waiting for an introduction. It has a habit of introducing itself, and does it through the leather of one's boots; but how it gets through, no one as yet has been able to find out. It is insignificant in size, a mere speck to the naked eye, but not so insignificant in its operations. As soon as it comes in contact with the foot it begins to bore into the ball of it, or under the toe-nails, its appetite having a seeming preference for the big-toe. There is nothing painful in the operation of its boring; it does it so gently that

the victim is unconscious of its presence until it has finished its contemplated home, and laid in it a sack of eggs—the sack being about the size of a small pea. It is now high time for the victim to wake up and stir himself. Unless the sack is taken out at once, the eggs will hatch and he is likely to have a sorry foot; so sorry, indeed, that he may have to part with that portion of his anatomy, or else with his life.

The natives are very expert at discovering and removing the little sack, which they do by clipping the flesh from above it with a sharp knife, and then lifting it out with the point of a needle. They charge a half-dime for their surgical services; a modest fee, and neither Wheatley nor myself begrudged it to the Greaser who so deftly and so quickly freed our foot from the dangerous little insect.

Thenceforth and during our entire year's stay in Nicaragua, our "jigger" watchfulness never flagged, for there was not a day that our pedals were not turned bottom-up for the scrutiny of a sharp-eyed native.

There is a diversity of opinion regarding the origin of the Castillo Rapids. Some authorities maintain that they are a natural obstruction to the channel, while others claim they are artificial, their many rocks having been placed in the river by the original natives to prevent marauders from getting any further into "the bowels of their land." They are situated at a bend of the San Juan, and, from the fort above, an uninterrupted view of the river can be had before it reaches the Rapids and after it leaves them.

Our delay at the place was tedious, but the end of it came at last, to find us aboard the "Director," and once more on our way up the river. A few miles above the Castillo there are other rapids called the "Toro." These, however, are easy to navigate—so easy, indeed, that we would have been ignorant of their existence if the captain of the "Director" had not enlightened us.

The river now began to widen, and the foliage at either side to lose enough of its density to give us a glimpse at the country

beyond. Miles of swamp were there—the home of Malaria and Death that hovered over it waiting patiently for the white man reckless enough to come within reach of their clutches.

On the afternoon of the next day we arrived at San Carlos. This is a place of twenty or thirty cane huts, and two or three habitations of more pretension. It is situated on the borders of Lake Nicaragua, at the point where the river leaves it to start on its way to the Atlantic. After a little more of the delay characteristic of the country, we were transferred to the deck of the "Central America," a steamer 180 feet long, and commodious and swift in comparison with the other two in which we had been traveling. She was a new boat, built by Commodore Vanderbilt in New York in seven weeks, and towed to Nicaragua by the Daniel Webster a short time before our trip. The Commodore himself came with her for the purpose of superintending the work of getting her over the Castillo Rapids —a task which his engineers had told him

was impossible to accomplish. But the Commodore was used to battling with impossibilities. He was not the man to shrink from carrying out his ends, however impracticable they might appear to other people. With the aid of ropes and windlasses the steamer was pulled over the rapids, but not without having a hole staved through her bottom. This, however, was soon remedied, and in a few days she was ready for her lake traffic.

Central American travelers, when they speak of Lake Nicaragua, are loud in their praises of its beauty, and sometimes at a loss for adjectives to do it justice. One of them ecstatically declares: "Lake Nicaragua is the queen—the beautiful queen of all the earth's lakes; and a man might well afford a trip around the world for the sake of a sail on her bosom."

Well, we were now on her bosom, with her emerald arms around us, and the dome of a tropical sky above our head and mirrored in the sheen beneath. Beauty, indeed, and plenty of it. The sun, that had so long

hidden his face from us, had swept the clouds from his path. His day's journey was nearly at an end, and he was now reaching for his couch of crimson and gold to "turn in" for the night. One lingering look —a good-night kiss, as it were—he threw upon the lake's fair breast, then dropped upon his pillow. And now the gorgeous hues of heaven changed. Robbed of his pencil's touch, their royal purple paled to pink, then faint and fainter grew to vanish in the sober gray of eve. Timidly the stars began to peep, first, one by one, then boldly by the hundreds, till the whole firmament, from zenith to horizon, was lighted with the celestial lamps, all blazing with a lustre quite unnatural and unknown to him who lives beneath a Northern sky.

Yet, novel and beautiful as the sight was, our ability to appreciate it was sadly weakened by our river experience. The lack of sleep was prosy enough to smother all of our romanticism, and until we could swallow a dose or two of Nature's "sweet restorer" we were in no humor to yield to the

fascination of her "queen of lakes," or spend our ecstasies on the beauty of her stars.

However, it is said that everything comes to him who has the patience to wait for it. We had left the mosquitoes behind us, and before us we saw the prospect of an undisturbed sleep; therefore, turning our back upon the glittering stars, we tumbled into our berths, while the plash of the steamer's paddles and the throb of her engine kept up a lullaby that hushed the recollection of our troubles and soothed us into forgetfulness.

When we awoke the sun was up and the steamer at anchor. She lay about two hundred yards from the shore and in front of our destined home—Virgin Bay, or "La Veerhin," as it is euphoniously pronounced by the natives. There was no wharf at which the steamer could land, and the lake being too shoal to allow her nearer approach we were taken ashore in a scow.

Our first glimpse at Paradise was not entrancing. Near the water's edge stood the Transit Company's office—a one-storied, tile-roofed structure, and the only one that

could boast of that kind of covering. The others were thatched huts and canvas tents. There were about twenty of the former, the homes of half-naked and dirty-looking Greasers, where they spend their days in eking out a something "that bears the name of Life." The tents, of which there were five or six, all wore upon their front a hotel sign; and to these unpromising hostelries the passengers were to look for their entertainment, or go without.

We spent the morning in the office of the company, whose agent, a Mr. Doyle, Wheatley had known in New York. At noon I suggested that we take a stroll, for the purpose of looking around us to see what the prospect was for entering upon our cattle enterprise.

The day was clear. Not a cloud in all the sky hindered the noonday sun while he shot his fierce rays perpendicularly down upon our straw hats and cast their circular shadows around our feet. One look at my friend's face was quite enough to convince me that his high opinion of Paradise and

faith in cattle enterprises were on the wane.

"Well, William," I said, "here we are in your land of orange blossoms; and now we 're here, how do you intend to carve out that fortune of ours? Is your cattle scheme to be the carving knife?"

A shade of disappointment darkened his handsome face.

"My dear fellow," he replied, "I am not easily discouraged, and always look at the bright side of a thing, if it has one. But, from what I have seen of the country, from the time we landed at Greytown until we reached this outskirt of civilization, I don't think Miller's scheme has a bright side—unless its utopianism can be called bright. Where are the cattle to come from? And if we had them, what is there here upon which to feed and fatten them? There are plenty of trees and a plenty of foliage, but I have yet to see the first blade of anything that looks like grass."

I quite agreed with him on the impracticability of the scheme, and told him so. "But," I said, "if you give it up what do

you purpose doing? Would you go back to the States?"

"To be laughed at? No. We must cudgel our brain and stir up something else —Hello! What 's this?"

On one side of the road stood a large tent, about twenty feet wide and a hundred or more in depth. It was the sign on the front that caught Wheatley's eye and drew forth his exclamation. The letters, which were a foot long, had been cut from red flannel and sewed on to tell the passer-by that the imposing edifice he was looking at was the "American Hotel."

The tent was divided into two parts, the front one being a bar-room which was now crowded with the passengers that had landed in the morning from the Webster.

Wheatley looked in the door a moment, and then said to me: "Suppose we go in and have a chat with this landlord. He seems to be doing a thriving business."

We entered, but the fellow was so busy behind the bar that we had to wait for a lull in the thirst of his customers. A half hour

passed, then the lull came, and we walked over to the bar, ordering "lemonade for two." Wheatley then began to question the host:

"Do you often have such a crowd as this on your hands?"

"Always on steamer days, and very often a much bigger crowd—so big that we can't accommodate them."

"How long have you been in this business?"

"About three months; but I am going to give it up."

"Give it up? What for? Does n't it pay you?"

"Yes, it pays well enough. But—" here he pointed to a very sick-looking man lying in a hammock at the side of the tent—"my partner there is down with the Calentura, and thinks he will die if he stays here. So I'm going to sell out and take him back to the States."

Wheatley stopped his questioning, and, taking me aside, said: "I have it, Joe! Suppose we go into the hotel business?"

I was taken a little aback at the idea of a light comedian running a hotel in such a country, and replied: "You 're not serious?"

"Never in my life more so, my boy. We 'll have another talk with this fellow to find out what he wants for his hotel, and if he is not too extravagant in his ideas, we will close with him at once."

Then, turning to the landlord, he said:

"You want to sell out?"

"Yes, and I 'll sell at a sacrifice."

"What do you call 'a sacrifice'?"

"Twenty-two hundred dollars for the tent, good-will, stock and fixtures."

"And the ground on which the tent stands? I suppose that is included."

"No. We hold the ground on a yearly lease of sixty dollars, payable monthly."

After some consultation we told him to make out an inventory of his stock and fixtures, and we would give him an answer in the morning.

It being now dinner time we asked him if he could accommodate us with the meal.

"Certainly," he said, "walk right back. Dinner will be ready in a few minutes."

The rear apartment of his tent was hung at the sides with hammocks, and between them a long dining-table was spread. Paying one dollar each to the man who stood on guard at the door, we entered and took our seats at the table.

Now, there is one epicurean delicacy with which Nicaragua abounds, and which I hitherto omitted to mention—beans. From the time we left the harbor of Greytown and all the way up the river we had them for breakfast, dinner and supper. "What a Paradise for a Boston man," I thought, and as I knew my friend had no Boston appetite for beans, I made the thought loud enough to catch his ear.

But "beans" is not their Nicaraguan name. He who hankers after them must ask for "frejolis." However, if his palate should have the disposition of mine, he will get over his hankering before he has been long in the country.

But to return to our dinner. The table.

which was spread without a cloth of any kind, was about fifty feet long, and down the middle of it, at regular intervals of two feet, stood huge bowls piled up with baked beans. The remainder of the menu was made up of fried ham, strings of jerked beef, and fried plantains. It seemed to me that if the passengers were always hungry enough to pay a dollar for a dinner of this description, we ought to make a pile of money out of our hotel speculation, if we went into it. Wheatley was of the same opinion; and on the following morning, when the landlord showed us his inventory, we paid him his twenty-two hundred dollars, and the next day took possession.

A very important thing now was to secure a good cook, and by the merest chance we got one. He was a Mahonese, and had been in the employ of Uncle Sam for years as a *chef* on one of his warships. He knew his business, and expected to be paid for his knowledge at the rate of one hundred dollars a month. We agreed to his terms, as he would take no less, and delay was dan-

gerous. The former cook had already left for San Juan del Sud, on his way to San Francisco, and we must fill the gap at once or drive the passengers that were now with us to seek another hotel.

It was three days before word reached us from the Pacific side that the steamer had arrived to take the passengers on their way. During this time we had about one hundred of them, each paying us $4.00 a day—that is, $3.00 for their meals and $1.00 for their sleeping accommodations, which might be in a hammock, or on the floor; and not a board floor, either. Beds and board floors were luxuries of civilization as yet unknown in Virgin Bay. The hammocks sometimes would be at a premium, and it was not an unusual thing to hear one of the floor-occupants dickering for a change of berths with his more fortunate companion who was swinging comfortably a few feet above his head. Their dickerings sometimes amused me, and here is a specimen of them which may, perhaps, hold some amusement for the reader.

"Tom, I 'll give you two dollars to swap berths."

"No, you won't."

"Two and a half?"

"Not if the Court knows herself."

"Then, what 'll you take?"

"Well, I don't feel like taking anything just now. Go to sleep and don't bother me. Maybe I 'll oblige you and take something—in the morning."

Our hopes were now in full feather. We were convinced that we had taken the right road to fortune, and our propitious start flattered us that the journey would be a short and pleasant one. But the course of tropical hotel keeping, like that of true love, does n't always run smooth. Here is an instance where it ran a little the other way. Out in the lake, and directly opposite to Virgin Bay, is an island from which two extinct volcanoes rear their bare summits 4000 feet into the air. One is named Ometepec and the other Madeira—stop a moment. I have stated that Ometepec is an extinct volcano, but that is not exactly true. Volcanoes are

as fickle as maidens of sixteen. They may be in an amiable mood to-day, but there 's no telling what humor may take possession of them to-morrow. For centuries previous to our visit Ometepec had been called a "dead volcano," and, when we saw it, to all appearance it was as dead as the proverbial mackerel. And thus it slept in corpse-like quiet for thirty years more, or until June 19, 1883. Then it suddenly awoke, and for seven days and nights kept up a belch of fire, accompanied with rumblings and earthquakes. When the belching ceased, desolation reigned. The whole population of the island had fled to the mainland, and the fertile slopes of the mountain, which had been under cultivation for hundreds of years, were buried in mud, lava, ashes, and rocks—the scoriaceous vomit of a volcanic stomach.

There is a moral to all this: "Put not your trust in princes," nor in dead volcanoes.

And now to take up the thread of my story. Ometepec and Madeira are united at their bases, and cover the island, which is twenty-four miles in circumference. Through

the gap between the two the trade-winds sweep on their way to the Pacific, and their sweep, which is continual, has sometimes a velocity that is a little cyclonic. On the sixth day after we had taken possession of the hotel they ripped the roof from over us and left the establishment bare-headed.

This was a reverse severe enough to destroy whatever faith we may have had in canvas roofs; and to avoid its repetition we resolved to replace the blow-away with a covering of thatch. To do this we were forced to rely upon the labor of the natives, and native labor was hard to get. A Greaser is never in a hurry to go to work, and won't, so long as he has a half-dime in his pocket to buy a glass of "Aguardiente." The reader, probably, has never had an opportunity to try this brain-befuddler. It is the liquor of the country, and will tangle up the legs of an imbibing neophyte in a much shorter time than either Jersey's apple-jack or her celebrated "lightning."

We tried to tempt the Greasers with the promise of a dollar a day for their work, but

their laziness would n't listen. They would pull out a half-dime and hold it up to our view with the exclamation: "Manana"—that is to say: "To-morrow, when this is gone!"

If their labor was hard to get, it was quite as hard to hold when we had it. Each man insisted upon having his pay when his day's work was done; if he got it, we would n't see him again for a week; and if he did n't get it, he would leave us altogether.

Under such a difficulty it was n't strange that our roof made but slow progress—so slow that a full month had expired before its three-thousand square feet of thatching was finished, and we were once more under shelter.

I have spoken of the jigger and the mosquito, together with their insinuating ways, but the reader must not imagine that they were the only borers into our anatomy and comfort. There were millions of venomous ants that marched in armies, determined to take possession of our house and person; myriads of fleas, possessed of a like determi-

nation; countless scorpions that took up their nightly quarters in our boots, to give our toes an early surprise in the morning; hairy tarantulas, hiding in bunches of plantains and bananas, with their fiery eyes watching for our fingers to come within reach of their spring; green snakes, with danger in their fangs, nestling in the thatch above our head, to drop upon us in our sleeping moments; and last, but not least, that mighty mite of vermin, named by entomologic science *pediculus tabescentium,* but better known to the world at large as the louse. In the North, where civilization and soap and water have their sway, this little gray-backed creature is supposed to seek no other human companionship save that of him with bathless propensity; but in the Paradise of the world it has no preference.

The reader may think I am prejudiced against the "land of orange blossoms," and exaggerating its discomforts. If that be his opinion I will not attempt to undeceive him. I am merely giving him what I learned from that "school-marm of fools," Experience.

She is a costly, but thorough teacher, and perhaps he would rather learn the truth direct from her, than take it at second-hand from one of her scholars.

And now to give one of my adventures of which, as I have said, I had more than I wanted. Among the trappings we had brought from the States was a large tent, 20x40 feet in size. This we had erected on the lot adjoining our hotel, and fitted it up with berths. "Now," said Wheatley, "I am going to try to be comfortable. We have lived long enough upon the ground in the company of fleas and jiggers and I intend to have a board floor to this tent, if there be any such things as boards in the land of Nicaragua."

"If there be? 'If' is a little word, but Touchstone says there's much virtue in it— Where do you expect to find your boards?"

"Listen and I will tell you. I have had a talk with the Captain of the Central America on this board question and he tells me we will have no difficulty in obtaining all we want in Granada. He also tells me that his

steamer will make a trip there in a few days, but advises me not to wait for that, for the natives of Granada, he says, are as shrewd as Yankees and when they see the steamer coming, they presume we are after purchases of some sort, and push up the price of everything fifty per cent. He says the better way would be to go up myself on horseback, or send somebody, two or three days before the steamer arrives there; then to buy our boards and whatever else we may need, and he will bring them down for us."

I saw what was coming.

"Well, William," I said, "don't beat about the bush, but come to the point. As you are not anxious for a seventy-mile horseback ride through a Nicaraguan wilderness, I am to be the somebody to take your place?"

"That is it, precisely. You don't object?"

"Object? No; quite the contrary. Although I have never in my life been on the back of a horse, and may reach Granada with a broken neck, yet I am rather delighted at the chance of seeing a little more of the country than I see here."

Then I called Eusebio—one of our native servants—and told him to hire a couple of horses, one for himself and the other for me. "But, be very careful," I said, "in the choice of mine. I want no circus horse—no shyer and prancer, but a staid, old plodder that knows how to get over the ground without pitching its rider into the mud."

He brought the horses, and about three o'clock in the afternoon we mounted into the saddles. Being my first appearance in the character of a horseman and my first attempt at "mounting the saddle" I was not astonished to hear a titter among the native spectators. Well, perhaps, they had reasons for their tittering; if they had, they were soon to have more of them.

"Which way, Senor?" asked Eusebio.

"To Granada," I replied, and he turned his horse's head toward the path that led up the lake.

I tried to guide my horse in the same direction. He took one step forward and then began to go round in a circle. When I attempted to stop his gyrations by pulling the

opposite rein, it had no effect except to make him gyrate the other way; or else, to lessen the scope of his circle, and revolve as if on a pivot. All of which was highly entertaining to the natives for the "Merry-go- round" was then a novelty as yet unknown to the world.

I beckoned to Eusebio who was now some distance ahead, looking over his shoulder to see why his master was not following him. When he came up, I asked him: "What's the matter with this animal, Eusebio? I told you I didn't want a circus horse."

He laughed and with a few words cleared up the trouble. In training the Nicaraguan horse, as well as the mule, he is taught to obey the rein, not by pulling on it, but by laying it gently over either side of his neck. To turn him to the right, the left rein is laid over the left side; to turn him to the left, the right rein is laid over the right side. If either rein should be pulled he will commence his revolutions and keep them up so long as the pulling lasts.

After this little lesson I had no trouble

with my horse, and felt as though I owed him an apology for my stupidity.

Our way along the lake was not such a one as could be traveled by a horse with any sort of a vehicle behind him. It was a mere trail that wound its course between the trees and among the tangled shrubbery. When these became too thick, the trail would emerge from the edge of the forest, follow the lake beach for a hundred or more yards and then bury itself again in the depths of the wood. Thus, alternately in the shade and sunshine, we jogged along, and so pleasantly that I began to think I had been hasty, and, perhaps, unjust in my opinion that there were no charms in a tropical life for a Northern man. I say I began to think so, but the thought had barely budded when my hat struck an overhanging limb. I looked up and almost at the same instant I felt a sharp pain in my upper lip. Putting my hand quickly to my mouth I took hold of a black ant that had his fangs fixed so firmly in my lip he preferred to part with his head rather than let go. He was a full three-

fourths of an inch long, without his head, which would have added an eighth of an inch more. The tree from which he fell was of the thorn variety, the thorns being from three to four inches in length; at the base of each was a small hole and each hole was the entrance to the house of one of these ants. I was fortunate in not shaking out any more of them.

But to return to my lip. It began to swell and with such rapidity that, in a quarter of an hour, it felt like a boxing-glove under my nose.

Eusebio recommended a mud poultice—not an agreeable thing to plaster over a man's mouth. However the pain was too severe to allow any squeamishness on my part; so Eusebio got off his horse and going to the edge of the lake brought therefrom a handful of mud which he plastered over my mouth and lip, tying my handkerchief around to keep it in place. The relief was almost instantaneous. By the time we reached Rivas all pain was banished and my lip had resumed its normal size and shape.

The sun was still an hour high when we stopped in front of the hotel in Rivas, but I resolved to go no further that night. I was wearied by my novel exercise; besides, there was no other accommodation ahead of us nearer than Nyndime, a little village some fifty miles up the lake.

Rivas had at that time a population of about ten thousand souls. Whether the passing of a half-century has increased or lessened the number I have never had the curiosity to know. Its principal hotel then, and the only one of any account, was kept by a Captain Cauty, an Englishman, who had been some time in the country and whose acquaintance we made as owner of the ground upon which our tent stood. His hotel was a large and comfortable one-story structure, built of adobe and roofed with tiles. Like all the better class of Nicaraguan houses, it had its four sides with an enclosed court-yard in which tropical plants and flowers were growing in wanton profusion.

The Captain received me cordially, and

spread an excellent supper for my entertainment. It was about the only meal I had as yet eaten in the "Land of orange blossoms" without the presence of beans. Our breakfast was equally good and it was served early enough to allow us to eat our way leisurely through it and yet be off on our road by sunrise.

And now I began to long for the end of my ride, the novelty of which was fast losing its gloss and growing threadbare. The novelty of a good road would have been more to my liking, for I was tired of constantly picking my way between rocks and around bowlders and under the limbs of thorn trees, whose branches were ever threatening me with a shower of ants.

Eusebio saw that my spirits were drooping and tried to revive them, but took a very peculiar method of doing it. He would point out on the wayside certain clumps of bushes and rocky caves in which he said the native bandits were in the habit of hiding and waiting for the unsuspecting traveler. When the latter approached, they would

pounce upon him, relieve him of his money or other valuables, then cut him up with their machetes and toss the pieces into the lake.

He had just pointed out to me one of these spots and was about finishing the enlivening story connected with it, when I saw a man coming toward us on horseback. He wore a sombrero, a white linen jacket, and a pair of trousers of the same material, encircled at the waist by a gaudy-colored sash. There was nothing singular about such a costume, for it is a common one of the country; but there *was* something singular about the pair of eyes that flashed from under that sombrero. Instinctively I put one hand on the butt of my revolver, and the other in the pocket of my coat. In the latter there was four hundred dollars' worth of gold, for my purchases in Granada, and I was not anxious to part with it for any other purpose.

Was I alarmed without cause? Perhaps so, for the fellow merely nodded a "buenas dias, Senor," and passed on.

"Who is that fellow, Eusebio?"

"Quien sabe, I never saw him before."

"Nor I; and shall lose no sleep for not seeing him again. How far are we from Granada?"

"Twelve miles, Senor."

"And from Nyndime?"

"Five miles, Senor."

"Then let us be brisk or the night may catch us."

The trail, which we had followed so long, now widened into a passable road that wound its way among fields of plantain and through groves of orange trees with their overhanging branches bending under the weight of their fruit of gold.

While such a sight generally holds a charm for the eye of a Northern man, it held none for mine. At that particular time I had but one thought, one desire—to get from off that horse's back. I was tired and sore, and the orange trees could wait awhile for my admiration.

"Here we are, Senor," said Eusebio, and then a sudden bend in the road brought us into the village of Nyndime.

"Where's the hotel?" I asked, "Is there such a thing in the place?"

"Yes, Senor; on the corner of the next street."

The hotel was of the usual adobe build, with a court-yard interior. The doorway stood at the corner of the house and seated upon the steps were two dark-eyed Senoritas who smilingly invited me in. On entering I found myself in the bar-room, across which a hammock swung diagonally suspended from two corners of the room.

"Shall I prepare supper for you, Senor?" and a pair of dark eyes looked at me in such a way I would have said "Yes" whether I wanted supper or not.

"Si, Senorita, supper for two," and I threw myself in the hammock. The supper was soon ready—ham and eggs, tortillas, chocolate and a dish of the inevitable beans; not a banquet, perhaps, yet I enjoyed it, for I had eaten nothing but a couple of crackers since I left Rivas.

It was now near sunset, and I determined not to attempt the remaining miles to Gra-

nada in the night, so long as there was another day coming. Throwing myself in the hammock again, I was about falling into a doze when the neigh of a horse caused me to open my eyes. I looked over the edge of the hammock and in the dim light of the fading day I saw a white-jacketed native leaning over from his horse and talking to one of the Senoritas. I had no trouble in recognizing the fellow as the owner of the eyes that had caused me so much uneasiness.

The conversation of the two was carried on in so low a tone I was unable to catch its purport. However, I did get hold of one of their words, "Americano," and this was quite enough to make me feel far from comfortable. After their talk had ended, the man resumed his upright position in the saddle and rode away.

I then turned over in the hammock and fell into a sleep. It must have been a sound one, for it took three or four shakes at the foot of the hammock to awaken me. I looked up and saw one of the Senoritas standing there with a lighted candle in her hand.

"Get up, Senor; we are going to close the house. Follow me and I will show you to your room."

She led the way out of the bar-room into a long corridor that ran upon one side of the court-yard. Coming to a door at the far end, she pushed it open, saying, "This is your room, Senor," and then left me. I paused a moment on the threshold before entering, for I saw something to make me pause. There were two beds in the room. On the footpost of one a candle flickered in a socket, which had been bored in the post to receive it. Upon the side of the other, sat my friend of the white jacket.

Now, I may as well confess that I am not a courageous man, when courage is the one thing needed. On the contrary, at such a time, I am apt to lose, not only my presence of mind, but also the control of my nerves and muscles. However, what I lack in courage I make up in caution.

As soon as I entered the room, the ill-looking cut-throat—I was now satisfied that he was nothing else—commenced catechis-

ing me: Where was I from and where bound? What was my business? Was I a Catholic or Protestant? To these and various other queries, I gave but one answer: "No intiende, Senor;" as this told him that I didn't understand what he was talking about, he stopped his questions and lay down upon his bed, without removing any of his clothes except the white jacket.

It was now my turn to prepare for the night, and in doing so I thought it policy to draw upon my stock of caution. First, I took my revolver from my belt, cocked and recocked it, examining it closely under the candle-light—all of which manœuvres were, of course, intended for the edification of my friend of the white-jacket. Then I placed the weapon under my pillow, blew out the light and lay down with all my clothes on, pulling my blanket over me. I lay with my face toward the other bed, nor did I change my position until the hard cowhide beneath me began to worry my hip-bone and threaten to push it through the flesh. In order to turn on my other side and still keep my face

outward it was necessary to wheel my body round and let my feet change places with my head. This I did, and then "tired Nature" had her way and I slept.

How long I had slept, or what disturbed my slumber, I knew not, but it was broken, and in an instant I was wide awake. The room was as dark as Erebus and silent as the grave. I strained my ears to catch the breathing of my white-jacketed companion but heard no sound save the ticking of my watch. My thoughts were centered solely upon him. Was he really a cut-throat, or only a harmless native metamorphosed into one by my heated imagination? I wasn't long in doubt. A light footfall on the brick floor at the foot of the bed and then I felt my blanket being lifted slowly from off my feet, while a hand passed gently under them. Drops of perspiration oozed from my brow and as freely as if it were a squeezed sponge. One moment's pause to try to pierce the darkness, and then I seized my revolver, jumped from the bed and flung open the door.

The day was breaking, and by its gray light I saw the fellow crouching upon the side of his bed. How I managed to raise the revolver and point it at his head is now a matter of mystery to me; but I did make that use of it, although the muzzle wabbled in too eccentric a fashion to be dangerous. But the object of it didn't seem to notice the wabbling. Trembling like a leaf in the wind, he dropped on his knees and, lifting both hands, cried out imploringly: "Don't shoot, Senor! Please don't shoot!"

I didn't shoot, nor did I intend to; but the fellow's abject show of fear had so stiffened the backbone of my courage that again I pointed the revolver at his head. The muzzle of the weapon did not wabble quite so much now, and he had no trouble in keeping his eye on it, while I threw at him some of his own lingo which he had no difficulty in comprehending.

"What do you mean, you rascal, by fumbling over my bed?"

"Don't shoot, Senor! My blanket—I was hunting for my blanket."

"Hunting for your blanket? A likely story—what is that?" and I pointed toward his horse, which stood in the court-yard, with his blanket thrown over it and already saddled for the departure he had contemplated taking in company with my valuables.

However slim my stock of courage may hitherto have been, I had enough of it now to equip the hero of a dime novel. "Come," I said, "there 's your blanket; now vamoose! and don't be long about it, or I'll bore a hole through you big enough to stuff it in!"

He wasn't long about it. Mounting his horse and digging his spur into the animal's side, he galloped through the gate of the court-yard. I looked and saw him take the road to Granada with his horse on the full run, his sombrero flaring in the wind, and the ends of his gaudy sash streaming out behind him.

The reason for the fellow's fumbling around my feet was lucid enough. He saw me lie down with my head at that end of the bed, and, in the dark, was not aware that I had changed my position. His object,

doubtless, was to get hold of my revolver. If he could have secured that, he thought it would be easy work to secure whatever else I might have. And probably it would have been.

Whether the dark-eyed Senoritas were in the plot to rob me and share the plunder, I know not; but it wore that complexion.

Sunrise saw us again on our way. I told Eusebio of my night's adventure, and that I thought it would be wise to keep our eyes about us, for when I saw the fellow last he was on the very road we were now traveling and might be lying in wait "to carve us up with his machete and toss the pieces into the lake."

My apprehension was groundless. Not a soul of the Spanish type, or of any other, did we see until we reached the suburbs of Granada.

Like all cities of Central America, the suburbs of this one are the habitat of the poorer classes, whose huts are built of cane and thatched with grass or palm. In the city proper the houses are of one story, built

of adobe and roofed with tiles. Nearly four centuries have passed since the city was founded, and at one time it was the richest in North America. But that was long ago, and it has since dwindled down to a place of little or no importance. It lies at the foot of the volcano Momobacho and, during its four hundred years of existence, has had many a shake of terrestrial nature. The population is about ten thousand.

But I must drop my out-of-the-way tangents and take up the object of my visit—boards. They could be had at only one place and at only one price—*cinquo pesos,* or $5.00 each. They were sawed from trees of bastard mahogany and measured twelve feet by fifteen or eighteen inches.

The next morning the steamer arrived, and in the evening the boards, together with myself and some other live stock in the shape of fifty chickens, were on board and bound for La Virgin.

On my return I found my partner's mind much exercised over a certain matter, and the story of the matter may contain a little

amusement for the reader. Before I tell it, however, a short explanation will be necessary in order to lull the scruples of such readers as may have a reasonable prejudice against all transactions that look slippery. Nicaraguan laws relating to personal property are somewhat lax; at least, we found them so, as far as their sway controlled the population of Virgin Bay. Whatever a man owned was his, so long as it was in his possession; when it slipped out of it, no matter how, it belonged to the somebody who was lucky enough to get hold of it.

And now for the story. I had scarcely entered our domicile when my partner approached me with a serious look on his face and a couple of sheets of foolscap in his hand:

"Joe," he said, "do you remember the inventory that was given us with our hotel?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"Why, I have it here, and in looking it over carefully, I find there 's a ten-dollar pig in it."

"Well?"

"But it is n't well, my boy. Though I find the pig in the inventory, I can find him no where else. There 's a sty back of the tent, but no ten-dollar pig in it nor any other kind of one. Now I am rather fond of fresh pork, and think I am entitled to a slice of that pig. My palate is getting tired of these everlasting strings of jerked beef."

"I 've no doubt of that; a pork chop would be more paradisal. But why don't you take your gun and try your luck in the woods? The flesh of a bird or two might give your palate a rest."

He reached for the gun that stood behind the bar.

"A good idea, my boy; strange that I never thought of it! Hand me the powder horn and shot pouch out of that drawer, and if I don't bring you something in half an hour that will make you smack your lips, I 'll be content to live the remainder of my days on beans and jerked beef!"

He shouldered his gun and started for the woods, the edge of which lay fifty feet in the rear of our hotel.

I lighted a cigar, picked up a book, and seating myself in the shade at the front of the tent, passed away an hour, reading at times, and now and then lifting my thoughts from the book and dropping them into the far-away haunts of civilization.

I was suddenly startled by the squeal of a pig. At first the sound came faintly, as if far away, then louder and louder grew, until at last it seemed to come from the very edge of the woods. I rose from my chair and looked back. A pig was there sure enough. And Wheatley was there, too, pulling at a rope which he had managed in some way to hitch around one of the pig's hind legs. While my partner was trying his best to drag the pig in one direction, the pig was trying equally hard to drag my partner the opposite way. These cross-purposes were plainly owing to a mistake of Wheatley's—he had made his hitch at the wrong end.

As I looked around the corner of our tent, he caught sight of me:

"For Heaven's sake, Joe, lend me a little help with this fellow, or I shall have to let

him go. He has made my hands all a-blister."

Then came another tug and another squeal, by which time I was on the field of action, and greeted by an exclamation that somewhat surprised me:

"My boy, I 've found that pig of ours!"

"That pig of ours?" I echoed.

"Yes, here he is."

"I see there is a pig here, but how do you know he is our pig?"

"How do I know it? By using the simplest bit of logic. If he isn't our pig, please tell me whose pig is he?"

This "bit of logic" was more simple than sound; however, as I couldn't answer his question, I didn't think it worth while to dispute the soundness of his logic. I merely remarked: "I don't wonder your hands are blistered; you have made your hitch at the wrong end."

"I couldn't help that, my dear fellow. When I threw my lasso, I aimed it for one of his fore legs, but he was quick enough to step out of it, and when I tightened the

rope I found my hitch, as you rightly say, at the wrong end."

"You must have had a Sisyphean task on your hands."

"Sisyphean? My boy, if Sisyphus had been condemned in the World of Shades to pull that pig backward for half a mile, he would have encountered more up-hill work in it than he ever did in his big marble block. Anyhow, he would have earned his chops, as I am sure that I have."

There was little doubt that my partner had "earned his chops," and none at all that he afterwards enjoyed the fruits of his labor. But what was my astonishment, a week afterwards, to see him walk into the back of the tent with another pig. Without giving me time to ask any questions, he said:

"Joe, I made a mistake about that other pig; he wasn't ours at all. But there's no mistake this time; here he is!"

I have never as yet been able to solve the mystery that hung around "that pig of ours." However, if there were any more of him roaming and foraging in the woods of

Nicaragua, my partner was thenceforth content to let it roam and forage in peace.

The next steamer day was a notable one for us. We captured about two hundred of the passengers, and among them were the then famous New Orleans Serenaders—the head and front of them being the Buckley Brothers. Frank Chanfrau, the actor and friend of both of us, was also among the number whom we now expected to be our guests until the arrival of their steamer at San Juan del Sud.

Virgin Bay is within twelve miles of mule travel from San Juan, and it was always our endeavor, and, of course, to our interest, to detain the passengers as long as possible. A few of them would become impatient and leave us, but the majority were satisfied to remain until we notified them of the arrival of their steamer at San Juan.

I have said nothing as yet regarding the nature of the "fodder" we furnished for their sustenance. Possibly, from what I have hinted, the reader may guess that "beans" played an important part. They did. The

other prominent features of the bill of fare were jerked beef, tortillas, or corn cakes, plantains, "bottled" butter and barreled eggs. ("Bottled butter" is not in any way related to the cow, but only a new and appetizing name for peanut oil.) It is perhaps needless to speak of the Nicaraguan barreled eggs, for they are not at all bashful and, if they have an opportunity, will speak for themselves. We had three or four barrels of them that came into our possession with the purchase of the hotel, and there was no other way of disposing of them profitably except through the stomachs of the passengers. If the question were sometimes asked me—as it often was—"Hello! Landlord; what's the matter with these eggs?" I could only answer: "I don't know. If there's anything wrong with them you must ask the Nicaraguan hens. That 's the style of eggs they lay down here."

Sometimes the answer would be satisfactory—if the man were a Californian. Northern men just from the States were more skeptical, and one of them, in reply

to my explanation, told me that he thought it "dern strange that a Nicaraguan hen didn't understand her business better than to turn out an egg with a pop in it like a toy pistol."

Of course, the Nicaraguan hen had nothing to do with it. The eggs were laid, nobody knows when, nobody knows where, and barreled for the delectation of those whom fortune, or misfortune, had thrown beyond the pale of civilization with appetites too fierce to be squeamish or discriminating.

I have said that the day of the steamer's arrival was a notable one—notable because it brought us the company of friends, and made us forget, for a time, the company of fleas and jiggers.

When the night came and the supper was over, the long table was cleared, the serenaders gathered round it and the Buckleys gave us a musical program arranged especially for our entertainment. It was then that we heard for the first time that negro melody which afterwards became so popular and which has not yet lost its pop-

ularity though fifty years have passed—"The Old Folks at Home." It was sung by one of the Buckleys, and with so much pathos that I saw the moisture glisten in the eyes of Wheatley and trickle down his cheek. But there was nothing strange in that. He had an "Old Folk" of his own at home and why shouldn't he give the tribute of a tear or two to the memory of that dear old mother of his existence?

After the program came champagne. Jokes and anecdotes flew around, so did the bottle, and all were as merry as good company and good wine could make them.

Now, Wheatley, though fond of a glass of wine, was not what the world calls "a drinking man." On the contrary he was inclined to be abstemious; a virtue for which he took no credit, because, as he told me, his comfort compelled it. "I have to keep my prudence constantly on guard," he said; "I may take a glass, or even two, with impunity, but if I go beyond that, the indulgence will throw my internal mechanism out of gear, and tie up my head in towels and ice-

water for a week." When an accident of this nature did befall him, its day-after effect was curious. He was sure that his days were numbered and that the light of another one would find him pitching headlong into the other world.

We left him seated at the table with the Buckleys and enjoying an event which was not likely to happen again. Then he thought he might venture, for once, to give his prudence a holiday. And he did. The next morning he failed to put in an appearance, and at breakfast time I went to look him up. Swung in a hammock at the back of our tent lay the comedian, with the Bible in his hand and a wet towel around his head. As I had my doubts about his appetite being very ravenous for his breakfast, I thought I would sharpen it a little:

"William, we are having buckwheat cakes for breakfast; get up and eat them while they 're hot."

He laid the Bible down, and putting both hands to his head squeezed it as though to prevent its splitting apart. Then he turned

over in his hammock mumbling to himself: "Buckwheat cakes for a dying man!"

We had now been in Nicaragua for about two months. Money was rolling in on us and we began to figure how long it would take to be up to our neck in California "slugs." But alas for the freaks of Fortune! The fickle jade, after patting us so kindly on the back, turned about, gave us a frown, and prepared to kick us out of Paradise with a flea in our ear and the Calentura in our bones.

And this is the way she did it.

The old Commodore had built a large steamer, the Northern Light, for his California line, and on her first trip to Greytown she brought a cargo of nine hundred and sixty passengers. They reached Virgin Bay and waited there for the North America, which was due at San Juan del Sud, to take them up to their destination. After a week of weary waiting, word came that the vessel lay a wreck on the coast, some three hundred miles above San Juan. There had been great rivalry between the Panama and Nic-

aragua companies, and the delayed passengers believed that the captain of the North America had been bribed to wreck his vessel, as the disaster happened on a moonlight night and in a calm sea. Whether bribery really had anything to do with it was never clearly proven.

In the meantime the Independence, another of the Vanderbilt steamers, came down from San Francisco, but her captain, after landing his own passengers, refused to take aboard those of the Northern Light, saying that his orders were to await for the consort of his boat, the Daniel Webster. The passengers let out their wrath in indignation meetings, but neither wrath nor indignation could budge the captain of the Independence. Loud and sulphurous were the anathemas thundered at the head of the Old Commodore, but as he was too far away to hear them, they began to look about for some way out of their trans-isthmian pickle. Those of them who had money enough, either took passage in sailing vessels to California or returned to the States. But there were others

who were not so luckily fixed. They had already spent their surplus cash and to keep themselves alive were forced to fall back on the plantain. The diet and the climate together caused a natural result. Sickness broke out among them, and the bones of many a poor fellow who had left his home with his brain brimming with dreams of a land of gold he was never to see, were left to bleach and crumble under the glare of a tropical sun.

Bad tidings fly fast, and the wreck of the North America and rumored bribery of her captain were known in New York and San Francisco before the sailing of the next steamers. The result was disastrous. The bottom of the Nicaragua line dropped out completely, as did also the bottom of our hotel business. The latter depended solely on the support of the to-and-fro passengers between New York and San Francisco, and the number of these thenceforth became so insignificant that we resolved to quit both the business and the country, whenever the opportunity came. But opportunities are

not always ready to come when they are wanted. For ten tedious months did we wait for ours, longing and fretting for the time; and it is perhaps Providential that we didn't know that it was so far away or we might have hurried it up by cutting our way out of the country with the edge of a razor.

However, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and it is a most fortunate thing that it does, for—if we are to believe Shakspere—"the miserable have no other medicine." We held a consultation and resolved to remain, reasoning ourselves into the belief that things might take a turn for the better, and propping up the belief with the consolation that we couldn't get away without the sacrifice of all we had invested.

Days, weeks and months dragged their slow way along. Then, through the fog of our ill-luck we saw the approach of that day which is so dear to the heart of Uncle Sam's subjects. Of course, I mean "the glorious Fourth."

Now, my partner was an American to the core, and saturated with love for "Old

Glory" and the Declaration of Independence. It was a pet doctrine of his that a copy of the great charter of our freedom should be tied about the neck of every American male babe as soon as born, and kept there until the child was old enough to vote; then laid aside to be handed down to his descendants as an heirloom.

"My dear boy," he said, "the day—the day of all days will soon be with us, and I intend to celebrate it with the spirit and glory it deserves."

"Celebrate it? Where is your glory to come from? We have a flag, I know, but where do you expect to get your fireworks and the *et ceteras,* and—"

"Don't be alarmed, my boy. I am aware we have no fireworks, but they would n't be appreciated here if we had them. As for the *et ceteras,* as you call them, have n't we two double-barreled guns and three revolvers? Won't these make noise enough?"

My friend was never at a loss to find a substitute for anything when the other thing could n't be found—a faculty which the

reader will discover to be a very convenient one, should he chance to spend many of his days in the Paradise of the world.

Now, to me the Fourth of July, as celebrated at home, is a nuisance. The smell of burnt powder hasn't the same fragrance to the man of twenty-five that it has to the boy of ten; nor does the racket of crackers and the bang of pistols have the same invigorating effect upon his nerves.

But circumstances alter cases, and, sometimes, very materially. We were not at home. We were in a foreign land, and our Yankee blood was now ready to gallop through its veins at the mere thought of the day at which we had been in the habit of turning up our nose and running away from when at home. Why, we could have hugged the small boy with his pack of noisy crackers, had he been about; but he wasn't, so we had to get along without him.

My friend's program for "the day we celebrate" was a success, considering the slim resources at his beck. He made the oration, and he made it an effective one.

When he reached the end he dovetailed it so neatly with the Declaration that it was difficult to discover the joint. His delivery of the pregnant sentences of the latter was quiet yet forcible, and with the tact of a true dramatic artist he held his climax in reserve. When he came to the closing sentence, he snatched a flag gracefully from a hidden recess and raised his arms aloft, waving the symbol over an ideal conclave of our revolutionary sires, whom he saw, in his mind's eye, pledging for us and our posterity their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

This was the cue for Eusebio and Lorenzo, our cook, whom Wheatley had stationed outside the tent, the one with the revolvers, the other with the double-barreled guns. Three or four volleys were fired and then came the next thing on the program: "Hail Columbia," followed by the "Star Spangled Banner."

Directly after the firing of the volleys Wheatley mounted the top of a barrel and spoke:

"Friends and Fellow Citizens: I did intend that you should sing these glorious old tunes, but as you, like myself, may not be well posted in the art of singing, I will not insist on your trying it. But I *do* insist on your making a noise of some kind. It doesn't matter about the tune so you get the words straight. Sentiment, not music, is what we are here for to-day. Now, follow me."

As my partner had said, singing was not exactly in his line, and I don't recall that he ever attempted it before or after that event. To follow him, therefore, was not an easy task. In the crowd of commemorators which, exclusive of the natives, numbered about twenty-five or thirty, were a few who had some recollection of the words, but each had his own idea about the rotation of the stanzas. The result of this, of course, "played Hail Columbia" with the sentiment.

One more feature remained on the program: "Yankee Doodle by a musical box kindly loaned by the Transit Company for this occasion only."

The box was a large and an expensive one, and perhaps would have performed its part in a creditable maner, if its owner had been present to keep its music under control. It had a long repertoire consisting of a dozen or more operatic airs together with a promiscuous assortment of jigs and hornpipes, and it insisted upon going through these before obliging us with "Yankee Doodle" that lay at the bottom.

My partner was annoyed at this hitch in his program, and again mounted his barrel.

"Fellow Citizens, we will now take an intermission of half an hour for refreshments, and also to give that box a chance to have its way. There 's no particular hurry; we can wait. When it gets through with its own program maybe it will consent to go on with ours. A Fourth of July without a 'Yankee Doodle' would indeed be like the play of 'Hamlet' with the melancholy Dane left out. Please step this way, gentlemen."

The crowd followed him to the rear of the tent, and was soon wrapped in convivial forgetfulness of the incorrigible box, which was

afterwards brought in and placed upon the table. Then, as if to atone for its previous stubbornness, it began its "Yankee Doodle" and kept up a repetition of it, until, exhausted of its wind, the strains dragged lazily along and finally ceased.

The celebration was now over, and the crowd, after a vote of thanks, made straight their way homeward—or as straight as circumstances would permit.

And thus ended our Fourth in the Paradise of the world.

I will not tire the reader with a recital of the many fruitless efforts we made to sell out and get away. Suffice it to say that at the end of our twelfth month I suggested to Wheatley that we put up our hotel and its contents at auction.

"Auction? Where 's your auctioneer?"

"Here," I replied.

"You? As the buyers will be mostly Greasers, how do you expect to make them understand what you are talking about?"

"I 'll manage that. If they but understand what they want, I know enough of

their lingo to make them understand that if they expect to get what they want, they must pay more for it than anybody else."

The day came and we had our sale. As the Transit route was dead beyond the hope of resurrection, nobody wanted the hotel; and the sum realized from the contents was not startlingly large, as they consisted of cracked crockery, dilapidated hammocks and bad whiskey. The crockery, however, brought bigger prices than similar articles, minus the cracks, could be bought for in New York.

At the end of the sale we had a few hundred dollars, and now resolved to leave the place and the country. But there was still a stumbling block in the way. During our stay we had been dealing with a Greytown merchant named Ferguson, from whom we had purchased flour and other stuff needed by our hotel, and who claimed there was a balance due him of $400. This was for goods we had never received, nor did we ever get vouchers to show they had been sent. Under these circumstances Wheatley

said he didn't feel like paying the bill, more especially as it would take the bulk of what we had realized on our sale to do it.

"Well, William," I said, "Ferguson is a man of influence in Greytown, and unless that bill is settled in some way, there is a likelihood of his holding on to our precious bodies until it is."

"Do you think so? Well, suppose we send for him and give him a note payable in three months after date. A bit of paper of that kind will be of less use to us than 'our precious bodies' and may be of more use to him."

"Very good; but if he refuses to take the bit of paper—what then?"

"My dear boy, never anticipate Trouble. Let her chase you, if she will, but don't run to meet her. I think Ferguson would much rather have the note than be bothered with the care of our bodies. Anyway, we will try him."

So we sent for Ferguson, gave him the $400 note drawn up on the stamped paper of the country, and the next morning were

on our way across the lake and down the river to take passage on the Prometheus for New York.

When we arrived at Greytown the steamer was not there, nor did she make her appearance for a week. During this time we stopped at the town's best hotel—a two-story frame building, the second floor of which was one large room, about thirty feet square, containing twelve cots. The first night, Wheatley and myself used two of them, the remaining ten being occupied by the Calentura's victims. The second night I was the only well man in the room, Wheatley having added another to the sick list.

'T was on our seventh day that the Prometheus steamed into the harbor, and I will leave to the reader's imagination the delight with which we both stepped upon her deck to bid good-bye forever to the Paradise of the world. *Mal-de-mer* had no terrors for us now; they had all been swallowed up in the capacious maw of those we were about to leave behind.

The Calentura clung to Wheatley during

the entire voyage to New York and for weeks after he reached there. As for myself, I took up my quarters in the city at French's Hotel, making daily visits to the home of my friend, who was then living with his mother and sister in 22nd street.

One day while I was crossing the City Hall Park, my head began to reel and my legs to bend and wabble after the fashion that sometimes follows a too liberal use of the bottle. The reader, however, must n't jump at that conclusion. The bottle, for once, was innocent. The Calentura was the culprit, and its seeds, which had been planted in me at Greytown, were now sprouting with alarming vigor. I never could have wabbled over the forty or fifty yards of pavement that lay between me and the door of my hotel without the help of a good Samaritan who saw my predicament and held me on my feet. He helped me into the hotel and up to my room where I lay alone for four days, with the fiery fever burning into my brain and filling it with phantasmal pictures of the land of orange blossoms. Fortunately for

me, Wheatley's mother missed my daily visits, came herself with a cab and took me to her home.

In adjoining rooms lay Wheatley and myself. Gradually my partner began to convalesce, while I was going step by step the other way. How far I went the other way the reader can judge. My head was fastened to my pillow as firmly as if it were chained there. Then, through some strange whim, or perhaps demand, of Nature, I craved a spoonful of what, in those days, was a much-be-puffed liquor—"Schiedam Schnapps;" but Mrs. Wheatley, before she gave it, deemed it safer to ask the doctor's permission. She had no trouble in getting it: "Let him have whatever he wants; it can make no difference now."

This was not a flattering diagnosis, but the doctor was mistaken. It *did* make a difference and a big one. A single teaspoonful of that Schiedam so astonished the Calentura that it loosened its grip. At the second teaspoonful, it let go altogether, and the third day I was out of bed and down stairs. By

the aid of ten more teaspoonfuls and ten more days, I gathered enough strength to start for and reach my home in that Quaker settlement which lies dozing on the banks of the Delaware and which the sarcastic Gothamites call "The City of Sleepiness and Brotherly Love."

Apropos of the Schnapps, I will relieve the reader of his suspicion—if he has any—that what I have written is an advertisement for its proprietor. The latter, I believe, has gone the way of all flesh and needs no puffery. As for his Schnapps, they too, for aught I know, may have been dead enough to follow him and take their place among the spirits of the other world.

After Wheatley had entirely recovered he determined to return to the stage, and did so, taking the management of Ford's Theatre in Baltimore. This was in 1851. The following year he came to Philadelphia as the stage manager for Thomas J. Hemphill, who was then the lessee of the Arch. When the season expired he leased the Arch with John Drew (the elder) as co-partner, and

opened it on the night of August 20th, 1853. The opening was auspicious. Crowded houses followed each other with regularity and it was evident that "Wheatley and Drew's Arch St. Theatre" and its "Star Company" were already ensconced in the heart of the theatre-going public.

Nearly three years had passed since we left Nicaragua, and during that time neither Wheatley nor myself had given a thought to that Greytown note. I had accepted a position in the box office of the Arch and was busily employed in entering up the receipts of the night before, when I was interrupted by an inquiry at the window: "Where's Wheatley?" I looked at the man whose face seemed familiar and yet I was in doubt. His features were those of our friend Ferguson of Greytown, but that individual when last I saw him weighed at least two hundred and fifty pounds, while the man before me would have had some trouble to tip the scales at half that weight. His coat hung flabbily on his shoulders, touching nowhere else, and could have been buttoned on his back.

"Mr. Wheatley is not in at present. But pardon me," I said, "have n't I met you before? Are n't you Mr. Ferguson of Greytown? I thought you were dead."

"You are right about my name, but not quite right about my being dead; although I would have been very dead had I not got out of that hole when I did. How long before Wheatley will be in?"

"I expect him shortly," I replied, and then he left me saying he would call again.

When Wheatley came in I said to him: "William, there has been a gentleman here to see you, and one that probably you are not anxious to meet."

"Not anxious to meet? I know of none that I wish to avoid. Who is he?"

"Ferguson, of Greytown."

Wheatley threw up both hands, as if he had been hit below the belt with a Minie ball. "Great God! That note!"

"Yes," I said, "and you 'll have to pay it. A note is a contract, and a contract, if it is good where made, is good the world over."

"I 'll not pay a cent of it. We received

nothing for it, and I 'll plead 'no consideration.' "

"That will be hard to do, with any success, upon a promissory note that bears on its face 'value received.' "

"Then I 'll plead 'duress.' "

"That, too, would probably be as futile. The proposition to give the note came voluntarily from ourselves. We were entirely too anxious to get out of the country, and the mistake we made was in not disputing the bill entirely; then, if our liberty to leave was restrained, your plea of 'duress' would have a leg or two to stand on. It is true that we imagined we would be held in limbo unless the bill was settled in some way; but 'imaginary duress,' in the scales of a court of justice, would hardly 'weigh the estimation of a hair.' "

"Well, my boy, your exposition of the law may be sound, yet nevertheless I shall retain counsel and fight this note to the bitter end."

He did fight it, and the "bitter end" turned out no sweeter than I thought. With all the eel-like squirmings of a Philadelphia

lawyer at his back, he was forced to pay the note, with nearly three years' interest.

The Old Arch has had both ups and downs in its day. When Wheatley and Drew took hold of it, the stock, of which there were one hundred and thirty-four shares, was selling at $225 and gradually rose to $400. Their capable management soon lifted the reputation of the theatre from out the mud, and dainty Fashion, that had for years avoided it as a pest house, now condescended to become its regular patron.

During Wheatley's connection with the Arch it was under the control of four different lesseeships: Thomas J. Hemphill's, Wheatley & Drew's, Wheatley & Clarke's, and that of Wheatley alone. He retired from its management in June, 1861, and then leased the "Continental," which stood on the site where Gilmore's "Auditorium" now stands. He had long contemplated the production of Shakspere's "Tempest" as a spectacular piece, and this was his chief motive for leasing the theatre. The play was produced, and during its run nine of the ballet

girls, including the four Gale sisters, were burned to death. The house was crowded on that occasion with twenty-five hundred people, and it was Wheatley's presence of mind that prevented a panic and the loss of, perhaps, hundreds of lives. The theatre at that time extended back to Sansom street, and the dressing room of the ballet was on the second floor and faced that street.

On the night in question, the curtain had risen on the "Ship scene," in the first act. Wheatley, dressed as Prospero, was standing at the first entrance, with the prompt-book in his hand, and watching the men working the sea cloth, which covered the entire stage. The mirrors, used in the fourth act to represent a lake, were built on a sloping frame (like that of a hot-bed) and this —for the convenience of handling—was divided into four sections which now stood between or back of the wings.

The play commenced. The little ship began to rock and toss upon the mimic waves; the lycopodium flashed; the thunder rolled and rattled in a way that Jove himself might

have been jealous of; the audience cheered and clapped and stamped, and then above the din of all there came a piercing shriek, followed by a crash of glass; and then an object, that looked like a ball of fire, rolled from the wings and out upon the stage. Before the audience had time to discover what the object was, the men at the wings had wrapped the sea cloth round it, and Wheatley rang down the curtain. His first thought was to save the twenty-five hundred people from the danger of a panic. He did not stop to know all that he was soon to know. The shriek, the crash of glass, and the ball of fire told him too plainly that if he possessed any coolness and presence of mind, now was the time to use them. Stepping before the curtain, he walked leisurely down to the footlights and spoke:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: There has been an accident which will keep the curtain down for a few minutes, after which we will proceed with the play." Then, with a motion to the orchestra to start an overture, he walked back of the curtain. Here his eyes

met a sight liable to make the stoutest heart to quail, and the steadiest mind to lose its equilibrium—nine girls, pacing between the wings, wringing their hands in agony, with their clothes burned off them, and their scorched flesh hanging in ribbons from their limbs and faces.

Wheatley paused but a moment to say to the call boy: "Go front and tell Mr. Whitton that I shall dismiss the audience, and to have the doors wide open." Then picking up Prospero's wand, he again stepped before the curtain. There was no sign of emotion in his manner; no trace of tremor in his voice:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:—The accident to which I referred will interfere with our performance more than I thought. The actors are so much excited over it that it will be impossible to go on with the play. Please go out."

They went out, but took their own time in doing it, which they scarcely would have done had they known that the back of the theatre was on fire. This, however, they did

not know until they were outside; and when the noise of the engines and the laying of hose told them the story there was many an inward thank to Heaven, and many an outward expression of praise for the man whose coolness had saved them the cost of a crushed limb, if not the cost of their life.

The accident happened in this way. The gas lights in the dressing-room were not enclosed with wire screens, as is now the custom, and the dress of one of the girls took fire by coming in contact with them. Her companions crowded around her to smother it, and in a few minutes all were ablaze. There was plenty of combustible matter in the room, and this also caught the flames, carrying them into the carpenter shop above, and setting fire to the theatre. Prompt work of the firemen, however, saved it from destruction.

The burned girls were taken to the hospital. They lingered there for a little while, then, one by one, their lives flickered out, and the body of each was carried to its grave from the home of Wheatley.

Having given an instance of my friend's presence of mind, suppose I give another to show how he sometimes suffered from its absence. Walking together one day we met a male acquaintance of his, but a stranger to myself. After a moment's conversation with him, my companion stopped the talk in order to introduce me: "Mr. Brown, it gives me the greatest of pleasure to introduce to you the best friend I have in the world. You may have heard me speak of him." Then he paused and whispered in my ear: "What the deuce is your name, anyhow?"

I enlightened him, but the incident set me to wondering whether a forgetfulness, daring enough to drive my name from his memory, would n't some day imperil the recollection of his own.

Now let us turn to Wheatley's lease of the Continental. It was merely a temporary one, and when it was about to expire he made a proposition to the owner, E. P. Christy, of New York, for a renewal at a reduced rent. While he was waiting for a reply he received a telegram from Jarrett,

Davenport and Wallack that they were about to take Niblo's Garden for three months, and asking if he would n't join them in the venture. Before he answered the telegram he sent another to Christy: "Will you accept my offer? Telegraph at once, yes or no." The answer that came back was "No."

It takes but small things, sometimes, to make or mar a man's fortune, and upon that little "No" hung the one that Wheatley had struggled for so long, and which was soon to drop within his grasp.

Re-engaging such members of his Continental Company as he thought would be required for Niblo's, he took them with him to New York, and the theatre was opened. Its success, however, did n't meet the expectation of Jarrett, Davenport and Wallack. Before the end of the three months they became discouraged, and backed out, leaving Wheatley the sole lessee. John Collins, the Irish comedian, had been engaged for two weeks, and it was during his first week that the dissolution of partnership took place.

From that time the tide of ill-luck began to ebb. Collins' second week was a profitable one, and this was followed by the engagement of Edwin Forrest—an engagement, by the way, that was not clinched without a little diplomacy on the part of Wheatley. Forrest was not the man to forgive and forget an injury, even though it were a fancied one, and he had long labored under the impression that his stage reputation had been injured by "this man Wheatley"—as he called him—and in a manner that would brook no forgiveness. The manner of the injury was this: When Wheatley was lessee of the Arch he chanced to stand in need of some play that would prove attractive, and he pitched upon "Jack Cade," bringing it out with E. L. Davenport in the title role. But before he did so, and through fear of trampling on the property of Forrest, he wrote to the author of the play, Mayor Conrad, asking what rights, if any, the great tragedian had in "Jack Cade." Conrad's answer was: "No rights at all. You are at liberty to play the piece if you choose."

Ten years had passed since this unpardonable damage had been done to Forrest's stage reputation, and still the recollection of it flourished in his breast. But there was something else that was flourishing in that broad breast of his—the recollection of his pocket. He was anxious to play an engagement in New York city, and there was no theatre open to him that his pride and ambition would permit him to play in, save Niblo's. Wheatley was not only willing, but most desirous to have him, and finally the mutual friends of both put their heads together, a reconciliation followed, and the engagement was consummated.

This was the inauguration of the extravagant rates paid to successful stars. Forrest's terms, previous to that time, were two hundred dollars a night, and a half-clear benefit each week. He asked no more and would take no less. But Wheatley, when he found the whole weight of Niblo's management on his shoulders, grew cautious. He thought there was a risk in paying certainties to stars, and determined to avoid it if he could,

whatever might be their drawing capacity. Therefore he proposed to Forrest to share the receipts after one hundred and fifty dollars, and to give him a half-clear benefit each week; a proposition which the tragedian grudgingly accepted.

Wheatley paid through the nose for his caution. Had he given Forrest his twelve hundred dollars a week, the difference between that and the sum he actually paid him, which averaged nearly three thousand per week, would have gone into his own pocket. However, he was satisfied with his policy, and so much so, that he offered Barney Williams—whose engagement followed Forrest's—the same terms, and with nearly the same result.

There seemed no doubt now about the future success of Niblo's. Wheatley renewed his lease at a rent of $15,000 a year, which was to be paid in forty weekly sums of $375 each. The next year his rent was raised to $18,000, and the following year to $20,000. All of his ventures proved profitable, save one—the production of "Faust and Mar-

guerite." The piece was put on the stage with care and expense, with J. B. Roberts in the character of Mephistopheles. It was a failure, and, as I have said, the only one to interrupt the train of Niblo's success.

And now I will step over a year or two, and come to 1866—a year which Fate had decreed should brim with luck for Wheatley, as well as for a pair of other managers, equally well known in the theatrical world. In the latter part of May or the early part of June—I have forgotten which—of that year, Jarrett and Palmer returned from Europe, whither they had gone for the purpose of seeking some stage novelty with which to open the coming season in New York. They had found their novelty, and now fixed their eye on Niblo's as the theatre best adapted for its exhibition. They lost no time in calling on Wheatley, and in the interview that followed, Jarrett said: "William, we have brought something with us which I think is sure to set the city wild; and we need only your co-operation to do it."

"What is the something?"

"A Grand Ballet—and a grander one than was ever seen on this side of the Atlantic. Now, we will make you a proposal."

"Go ahead; what is it?"

"It is this: That you take Mr. Palmer and myself in with you, as partners in the management of Niblo's, to bring out on its stage a spectacular play, in which we can introduce our Ballet. The dresses—and we have a multitude of them—were made in Paris. They are of the most gorgeous description, and alone will be a feature strong enough to make the piece, whatever it may be, a big success."

Wheatley accepted their proposal at once, an agreement was signed, and the partnership consummated.

Then came the question: "What shall the piece be?"

"Have you thought of any?" asked Wheatley.

"Yes, the 'Naiad Queen.' "

"Well, that has an advantage in its room for scenic effects; but there 's one objection to it. Should we make a success of it, every

concert saloon in New York will be playing the 'Naiad Queen.' "

"Well," said Jarrett, "suppose we wait a day or two. Something else may turn up."

"Something else" did turn up. Charles M. Barras, a New York actor, had written a play which he called "The Black Crook." He had carried it around in his pocket for months, hoping and vainly striving to get some manager bold enough to take hold of it. Whether he had heard of the quandary the managers of Niblo's were in, I know not; it is more than likely that he had, else he would not have been so independent about his play, nor so stiff about its price. However, be that as it may, he brought the manuscript to Wheatley, who saw at once that it was the very thing he needed.

"What do you want for your piece, Mr. Barras?"

"Two thousand dollars for the sole right to play the piece in New York city. You may think the terms exorbitant, but I know my play is worth it. At all events I will accept no less."

"Well, Mr. Barras, I will consult with Jarrett and Palmer, and let you know whether or not we will accept your play."

"There is another condition I must insist on, Mr. Wheatley, should you accept the piece."

"What is that?"

"After the play is produced there must be no intermission in the run of it; otherwise the contract will be at an end."

Now, the Black Crook was not a play of much literary merit. It had no plot to speak of, and but little originality, being nothing more than a conglomeration of the "Naiad Queen," "Lurline," "Undine," and a few other spectacular chestnuts. But literary merit was not what Wheatley was looking for. He wanted a piece with opportunities for scenic display, and the Black Crook was full of them. He wanted a piece the title of which would catch the eye and ear with its novelty, and he thought the "Black Crook" would do both. In fact, he believed the title, alone, worth all that Barras demanded for the right to play the piece.

Whether Jarrett and Palmer would have the same high opinion of it was another question. Wheatley showed them the manuscript, but when he told them the price that Barras asked for it, they thought the man must be crazy.

"Two thousand dollars? Why, we can get Daly to write us a play for one-fourth of that sum, and one we can own outright."

"Perhaps you can," said Wheatley, "but it won't be the Black Crook. I am convinced that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a play, at any price, so well fitted to our purpose. However, we will discuss the matter again to-morrow. After a night's sleep over it, you may open your eyes to look at it as I do."

The night's sleep had the desired effect. The next day a contract was drawn up and signed, by the terms of which Wheatley, Jarrett and Palmer agreed to pay Chas. M. Barras the sum of two thousand dollars, in consideration of which they were to have the sole right to play the Black Crook in New York city, and as long as they liked—pro-

vided there was no intermission in the run of it.

These clever managers made one mistake. If their cleverness had been a little more sharp-sighted, and could have looked a few months into futurity, it would have been better for their pockets. They would never have rested content with the right to play the Crook in one city, but would have left no stone unturned to secure the right for all cities. In other words, they would have tried to buy the piece outright. Before it had been produced, Barras, in all probability, would have snapped at an offer of $10,000 in spot cash; a month afterwards that sum quadrupled would not have tempted him. Reports of the play's success had flashed into every nook and corner of the country. Managers were flooding him with letters, begging him to sell them the right to play his piece, and before the Crook was six months old, it had placed in the pocket of its author the tidy little sum of $60,000 in royalties.

Let us now take a look at the trouble and

the money the Crook cost before it was ready for the public eye. The managers were anxious that its production should take place about the first week in September, and, to effect this, every moment of the intervening time would be needed. Unfortunately there was a considerable number of these moments which did n't belong to them. The Ravels held possession of the stage, with an engagement which had six weeks yet to run, and they insisted upon playing it out. They were not making much money, either for themselves or the management, yet nothing but a check for ten thousand dollars could induce them to change their mind, and cancel their engagement. They got the money, and the managers were then free to go ahead. The old stage was taken out, the earth beneath it excavated to a depth sufficient for the dropping of scenes, and a new stage put in. This was a marvel in its way. Never before, on either side of the Atlantic, had a stage been constructed so complete for its purpose, and so complicated in its mechanism. Its cost was over ten thousand dollars.

Before the curtain rose on the first night of the Crook—September 10, 1866—the management had laid out fifty-five thousand dollars in its preparation. Their bills and advertisements figured the sum at five thousand less, but this was an error. The actual cost was not known on the opening night, nor, indeed, for some time after, and then the sum, in round numbers, turned out to be what I have named.

The success of the play was phenomenal. In five weeks—thirty-five performances, including the matinees—the box-office gathered in eighty-seven thousand dollars. As the running expenses for that time were about thirty-one thousand five hundred, or a little over six thousand a week, the Crook had wiped out its cost, and handed a little surplus to its managers.

There was one thing that helped materially to swell the success of the Crook—I mean the stream of abuse poured out upon the play by the New York *Herald*. The cause of this abuse arose out of a quarrel between Barnum and Bennett, and in this

way. In July, 1865, the showman's museum was burned to the ground. Bennett fancied that the site would be an eligible one for the erection of a new *Herald* Building, and, before the ruins had fairly done smoking, he opened negotiations with the owner of the land for securing a fee title, and also with Barnum for purchasing the remainder of his lease. Real estate experts having told Bennett that the fee to the property was worth $400,000, he signed a bond agreeing to pay the owner $100,000 in cash, and to give a mortgage for $400,000 more. He was willing to pay the $100,000 over and above the estimated value of the fee, as he was anxious to commence his building at once, and his offer, which was accepted, prevented delay. Then he went to Barnum, who wanted $200,000 for his lease, which had some years to run. After a good deal of higgling, Bennett agreed to the price and gave him a check on the Chemical Bank for the money. And now commenced the trouble. The experts who had estimated the value of the fee evidently knew nothing of

the existence of Barnum's lease upon the property, or they would have found out what he asked for it, and deducted the amount in making their estimate. After their error was made known to Bennett, he quickly discovered that he had paid too much for his whistle. Seven hundred thousand for a bit of land, fifty-six by one hundred feet, was a higher rate than had ever before been paid in New York or any other city in the world.

On finding out his mistake, he immediately notified the owner of the ground that, notwithstanding his agreement, he concluded he would n't take the fee. Then he went to Barnum and told him he had no use for the lease, as he was not to be the owner of the land, and therefore the showman would greatly oblige him by handing back his $200,000. But the worldly-minded Barnum did n't look at the transaction in that light. He had the money in his pocket, and told Bennett that he intended to keep it there.

"You 're not in earnest, Mr. Barnum?"

"Seriously so."

"Then all I have to say is that you 'll regret it."

After the fire Barnum had taken his company to the Winter Garden, where he was giving entertainments; and on the morning following his interview with Bennett he looked for his advertisement in the columns of the *Herald,* but it was n't there. Then he sought for the reason of its omission, and got it from old Bennett himself:

"Mr. Barnum, hereafter, I don't want your advertisement, and won't take it at any price."

This was not pleasant information for the showman. He was about to start another museum on Broadway, and did n't relish the idea of being barred the use of its columns, for he knew the value of the *Herald* as an advertising medium.

"So, he won't take my advertisement, hey? Well, I 'll make him sweat for this, and probably change his mind."

His method of making the Scotchman "sweat" was this: The day after Bennett had refused his advertisement he called a

meeting of the Board of Associate Managers, and told them of Bennett's action, and then made a motion that all the managers, in a body, withdraw their advertising and printing from the New York *Herald*. The motion was carried, with but two dissenting votes—William Wheatley's and Lester Wallack's. Then another motion was made and carried: "All of our future advertisements in the other papers shall bear the headline: 'This establishment does not advertise in the New York *Herald*.'"

Whether all this caused the Scotchman to lose any of his perspiration or not I cannot say; but, at all events, he did n't part with enough of it to make him change his mind and insert the showman's advertisement.

In the meantime the heads of the Crook's managers were full of conjecture regarding the course the *Herald* would take toward the play when it was produced. As they looked for no praise, there was but one of two things they could expect—silence or abuse. They preferred the latter, and got it.

Now, if the purpose of Bennett's diatribes was to prevent the success of the Crook, that purpose lamentably failed. But I cannot believe or imagine that the shrewd old Scotchman had any such intention. He had lived a newspaper man long enough to know the foibles of human nature, and also to know that since the days of Adam and Eve curiosity has been its mainspring. Therefore I think that his columns of vituperation were meant to help, and not injure, the Crook. There is no doubt that he knew of Wheatley's friendly disposition toward him and his paper—as evidenced at the meeting of the Board of Managers—and as he could n't, with consistency, puff the play, he took plan which he thought would prove quite as effective in stirring up the curious, and crowding them within the doors of Niblo's.

The following is a sample of the *Herald's* abuse, and I venture to say that if Bennett had asked the managers of the Black Crook to pay for a few more samples of the same sort, he could have commanded his own price, whatever it might have been:

"Nothing in any Christian country, or in modern times, has approached the indecent and demoralizing exhibition at Wheatley's Theatre in this city. The Model Artists are more respectable and less disgusting, because they are surrounded with a sort of mystery —something like a veil of secrecy—which women do not look behind, and men slip in stealthily to see. But the almost nude females at Wheatley's are brought out boldly before the public gaze. . . . .

"Of course, Wheatley is making money. It is just such a spectacle as will make an excitement, and draw those crowds of loose characters and people with morbid, prurient tastes, which may be found in all large cities. Then there are a great many people who come in from the surrounding country to get a glimpse of this new thing. We must not, therefore, give credit to our citizens for being the only supporters of the shocking performance. It gets a great deal of support from the countrymen who come to town expressly to see the 'elephant.' . . . .

"Nothing, as we have said, has been wit-

nessed in a theatre in modern times so indecent as this spectacle. We can imagine there might have been in Sodom and Gomorrah such another place and scene, such a theatre and spectacle on the Broadway of those doomed cities just before fire and brimstone rained down upon them, and they were buried in the ruins.

"There was, too, we believe, similar places and scenes in Pompeii just as that city was buried beneath the eruption of Vesuvius. We may be saved, perhaps, from a like fate on account of the many good people there are in New York. . . . . But that does not do away with the guilt of tolerating or permitting such an exhibition to exist as that at Wheatley's. Our respectable citizens should cry it down, and the police should arrest all engaged in such a violation of public decency and morality. . . . .

"Let husbands and parents and guardians who value the morals of their wives, their daughters, and their wards, bear a watchful eye, and keep them out the walls of Niblo's during the rein of the Black Crook. . . . .

"If any of the *Herald's* readers, in spite of its warnings and advice, are determined to gaze on the indecent and dazzling brilliancy of the Black Crook, they should provide themselves with a piece of smoked glass."

But the *Herald's* abuse was not the only spur to the curiosity of the public. The Rev. Charles B. Smyth, of New York, made use of all his pulpit oratory to prevent the pure innocence of the Gothamites from being soiled by coming in contact with the Black Crook. Two months had passed since its production, and with no falling off, but rather an increase, in its popularity and power of attraction. "Now," thought the reverend gentleman, "it is high time for me to step in, or Beelzebub and his show will gobble up the whole city."

So he stepped in by renting the Cooper Institute and preaching a sermon, the text of which was "The Nuisances of New York, Particularly the Naked Truth." The sermon was a remarkable one, especially for the quality of its hell-fire—an article, by the

way, which is said to have no terrors for the New Yorker. This may be a slander, but, whether it is or no, Smyth's brimstone was not the sort of stuff to frighten a Gothamite away from Niblo's. Here is a specimen of it:

"But our chief concern to-day is with the dancing, theatrical representations, and of a particular establishment which has lately attracted a great deal of attention. I know not what may have been the motive that impelled the gentlemen, to whom it belongs, to get up its sights. Who can tell but their love of human nature in general is such that, from the most generous impulses, they have gotten up an expensive and dazzling entertainment purely for the purpose of lightening the cares of life of the busy and careworn, by giving the latter an opportunity, on as low terms, almost, as the most extravagant places of amusement, of seeing by gas-light and hell-fire light, and in the bronzed light of His Satanic Majesty's countenance, and in the red glare of the recording demon, the beautiful countenances,

regular busts, trunks and limbs chiseled out from head to foot by Nature's own hand with an exquisiteness of perfection far surpassing any that the finest art of man has ever wrought in Parian marble, with charms more bewitching and attitudes of softness and luxury most fascinating. . . . . Poor, dear, darling, charming, enchanting creatures; who could help loving them?"

If there were any among those that listened to this sermon, who had not as yet seen "The Naked Truth," it is more than likely they lost no time in taking a glimpse.

The reverend gentleman's crusade, however, came to an untimely end. His first sermon, much to the regret of the Crook's managers, was his last. The Trustees of the Institute were not satisfied with the character of his brimstone, and refused to allow any further display of it upon their premises. Moreover, one of them uncharitably suggested that Mr. Smyth's motive in preaching against the Crook was a worldly one—in plain words, that he was in the pay of its managers. This was not so. I was in a po-

sition to know all the inside workings of the Crook, and, in justice to the reverend gentleman, as well as to the managers themselves, can say there was as little truth as charity in the suggestion.

The Crook had a continuous run of nearly sixteen months, and at the end of it Wheatley retired from the management of Niblo's with three hundred thousand dollars to his credit. Ambition would probably have tempted other men to reach for more. My friend's ambition was not of that stripe. He thought he now had all of this world's goods he would ever need, and was content. Never again did he indulge in theatrical "flyers," for he was aware of the uncertainty that surrounds them. Age was creeping upon him, and he was too mindful of his declining years to further flirt with Fortune. True, she had been kind to him of late—"more kind than is her custom;" but he knew her for a wayward wench, and was not disposed to give her the chance of changing her mind, and filching from him that which she had been so slow to grant.

And now, having spun my narrative, and perhaps to a tedious length, let me close with a word or two in memory of him, the subject of it. William Wheatley no longer lives, but while he did he had every attribute to catch and hold the respect of those who knew him. It is true he had his frailties—which of us has not?—but "take him for all in all" he was

In truth a man of men; of sense refined;
Whose gentle mien betrayed the polished mind;
As actor, too, where stands his peer to-day
In Comedy, or Farce, or five-act play?
The Stage now grieves his loss—the Art he graced
Will wait in vain to see the loss replaced.

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